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FIRST LOOK

EXPERIENCE Wii

17-PAGE BLOWOUT!

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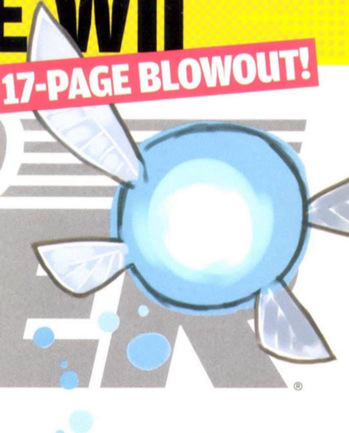

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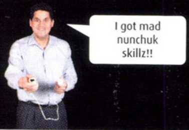
I got mad nunchuk skillz!!

If I stand really still, they'll never know I'm here! Pg. 54

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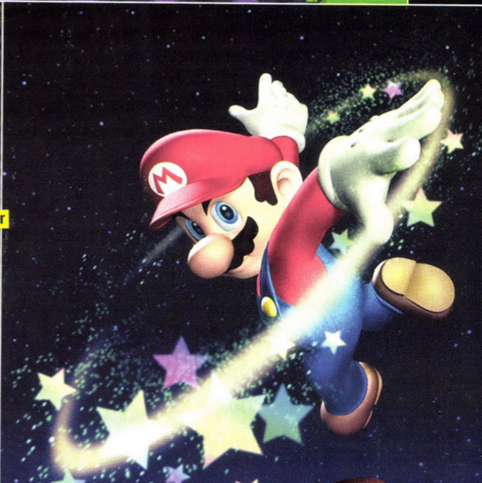

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Eidos busts out the big guns. Pg. 68

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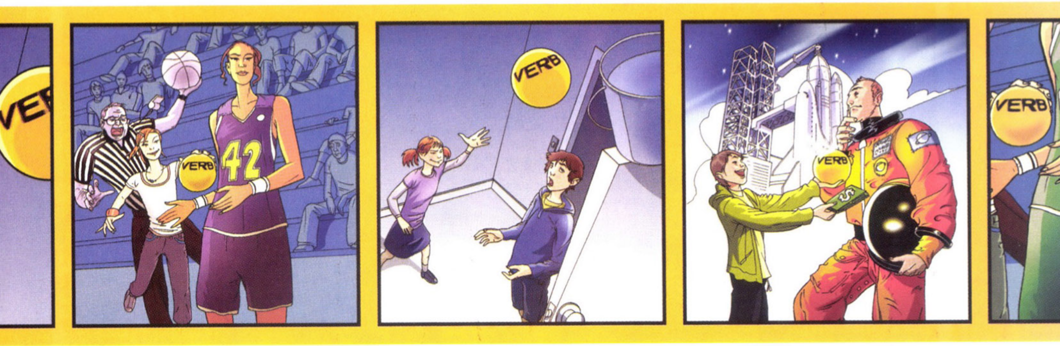

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Like my new 'do? It cost me a fortune, but it was worth it.

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Get the whole set! Wind-up Mario! Wind-up Peach! Collect 'em all!

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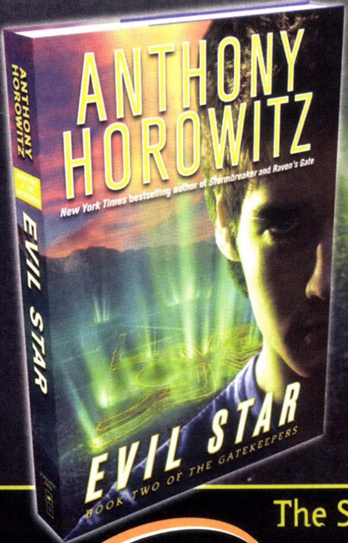
Those are some sweet aviators, dude. Pg. 88

New from **Anthony Horowitz**

Matt thought his troubles ended at Raven's Gate. But a powerful and grotesque villain is bent on destroying him and unleashing the Old Ones upon the world. Matt's fate is tied to four others like him across the globe—the first lives on the streets of Peru. But how can two kids who don't speak the same language stop evil forces from fulfilling the world's most catastrophic prophecy?

The Old Ones have a new gate.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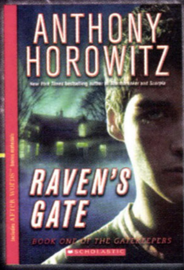
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Pulse

SAY HELLO TO Wii

It began with a promise of something new; Nintendo's president Satoru Iwata called it nothing less than a revolution in gaming, but scant information was revealed about Nintendo's upcoming home console until last fall, when the world was introduced to the console's unique controller. Playing was believing. The slim controller fit in one hand like a TV remote, and with amazing precision it relayed the movements of your hand to the game demo on the TV screen. Speed. Direction. Tilt. It captured every nuance. Although the early demos were simple—air hockey, fishing, flying a toy plane—it was the most intuitive initial control experience I've ever had. It didn't take long for people to begin speculating about how the controller would be used; you could hold it like a sword and slash at onscreen foes, you could aim it like a gun, you could pet a dog or whack a mole. And it was further revealed that you could attach a secondary unit, "the nunchuk," which sported an analog control stick and two buttons. That was all we knew about the experience of the console code-named Revolution until recently.

In the weeks leading up to this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) the Nintendo Power staff got its first chance to play early versions of real games for the new console whose official name was also unveiled. Wii (pronounced "we") represents the inclusive nature of the experience. It's a console for everyone: hard-core Nintendo devotees, sports nuts, FPS fanatics, casual gamers, even people who have never felt comfortable picking up a controller. The two lowercase *i*s represent both the controllers and the players. If you haven't seen the Wii logo animation on nintendo.com, check it out. Each i comes to life; they play around then pop back into the name. You won't find Wii in a dictionary yet, but it is already defining a new gaming experience. And that experience is what we'll begin sharing with you in this month's 17 page Wii feature. You'll read about our actual hands-on time with Metroid Prime 3: Corruption, Excite Truck, Super Mario Galaxy, and a number of demos that ranged from playing sports to conducting an orchestra. We've also worked closely with third-party publishers such as Activision, EA, Sega, and Ubisoft to bring you news about their Wii development projects. Unfortunately, our deadline for the magazine arrived just as the show opened, and very few screenshot images were available at press time. That situation will be corrected as we move forward with our coverage over the coming months. But this month is all about introductions. You'll see how each game experience is translated uniquely through the Wii controller. (Wii developers are only beginning to scratch the surface of what they can do with the controller.) You'll also learn about a number of never-before-announced Wii titles from Nintendo and other publishers, and get all the news on Wii, Nintendo DS, GameCube and Game Boy Advance.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

PoP-CORN FLICK

I just beat Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones and it was really awesome. My friends and I really like the story, and are wondering if you have heard anything about a Prince of Persia movie.

stiqe
via the Internet

Though nothing's official yet, uberproducer Jerry Bruckheimer recently expressed interest in doing a Prince of Persia film. As long as he doesn't enlist the directorial "talents" of Uwe Boll, we're all for it.

SERIOUS BUSINESS

My brother was scolding me for sending you guys so many goofy questions. He says your Pulse section is strictly for questions about the new systems and games. Could you please convince him that the Pulse section is also meant for a little laugh now and then?

LC
via the Internet

Your brother is absolutely right. This is a place for earnest dialogue on the major issues facing gamers today. We can't waste precious space on shenanigans.

MISSING REVIEWER

I've recently noticed that Pete Michaud's picture isn't in the reviews section anymore. What happened to him?

BJ
via the Internet

Contributing writer and crack commando Pete Michaud was sent to prison by a military court for a crime he didn't commit. He promptly escaped from a maximum-security stockade to the Los Angeles underground. Today, still wanted by the government, he survives as a soldier of fortune. If you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can find him, maybe you can hire . . . Pete Michaud!

>LETTER OF THE MONTH

I really enjoyed last month's feature on the I Am 8-Bit exhibit. It offered further proof that games are much more than just simple entertainment, despite what some out-of-touch movie reviewers might have you believe. They can inspire people. They can touch people's lives just like any other art form. No one would argue that music isn't art. Or that illustrations aren't art. Or that storytelling isn't art. So how does it suddenly cease being art when you combine those elements in a video game? Now, I'm not saying that all games should be considered art any more than all movies should be. (Have you seen Stay Alive?) But it's high time that the medium as a whole got the recognition it deserves.

Kent K.
via the Internet

This topic has been much bandied about in the gaming community of late. We wholeheartedly agree with you, Kent.

LOOKIN' FOR ADVENTURE

Reading about the new Brain Age game in an issue of my son's Nintendo Power was all I needed to take the plunge and buy myself a DS. While not-so-patiently awaiting the release of Brain Age, one of the first games I purchased was Trace Memory, which I found very addictive. I made my way through that game in a few days, and would love to find more games similar to it. What would you recommend?

DS Mom
via the Internet

It's great to hear that Brain Age is indeed helping a wider audience discover the joys of gaming. To answer your question, we'd recommend Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, Lost in Blue, and Trauma Center: Under the Knife. All three are top-notch adventures.

BIG APPETITE

I have a question. I'm a teenager and I'm trying to save money for a Revolution and a few launch games. Some days I skip lunch to save my lunch money (15 bucks a day), but I have to eat sometimes! What is Nintendo Power's advice for making some cash?

David W.
via the Internet

Fifteen bucks!?! Who's your school chef, Wolfgang Puck? How about going with the roast beef sandwich instead of the caviar and filet mignon once in a while? That should save you a few bucks, Richie Rich.

SWEET DREAMS

I did a little reading on the Sega Saturn game NiGHTS into Dreams and I thought a GameCube version would be cool. What do you guys think?

Absol the Destroyer
via the Internet

Actually, if there's any existing franchise that seems tailor-made for Wii, it's NiGHTS. Rumors from Japan suggest that such a game is in development, but Sega of America denies its existence. We'll keep bugging 'em.

VEGAS, BABY!

Are there any Nintendo events coming to Las Vegas, Nevada? It's been quite a long time since anything's happened there.

Eduardo O.
via the Internet

As a matter of fact, NP writers Steve Thomason and Chris Shepperd are planning an "event" in Las Vegas sometime in early June. It's being held in the Bellagio poker room.

MAYBE EA WILL PICK IT UP

Why haven't they made a Clash of the Titans video game?

Julien F.
via the Internet

We're guessing because a) it's a 25-year-old movie in which the the most memorable character was a robotic owl, and b) no one wants to look at Harry Hamlin's greased-up chest ever again.

IT'S A PARTY AND EVERYONE'S INVITED

I've become a little concerned about Revolution. Sure, I'm really excited to play the new Super Smash Bros., and the backwards compatibility only sweetens the deal, but it seems to me that with its unique controller, the Revolution may have problems with third-party support. Companies that want to make games for the new console may run into trouble configuring their games with the control system. Also, to be blunt, Nintendo really hasn't had great success with selling its previous consoles to third-party developers.

Blue Dragon
via the Internet

We understand your concerns, but Wii is already garnering a lot more third-party support than the GameCube did in the early going. Nearly every major third-party publisher has at least one title under *development for the launch window. You can check out a few them in this issue.*

LITE QUESTIONS

My friend and I were each thinking about getting a DS Lite when they come out, [but we have] a question concerning Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. When we first connected using our current DS systems, there was a prompt [stating] that your [friend code] is linked to the system. Does this mean that we would lose all of our [online-related] data when playing on the new DS Lite?

Alex G.
via the Internet

Nope, you can transfer your friend code from one DS to another (including a DS Lite). For full instructions, go to nintendowifi.com and click on Tech Support, then Connection Support. You'll find "Transferring a Nintendo WFC ID to another DS" under Additional Topics.

I have a question regarding the DS Lite. I was wondering if the little machine will have a longer battery life or not.

Patrick S.
via the Internet

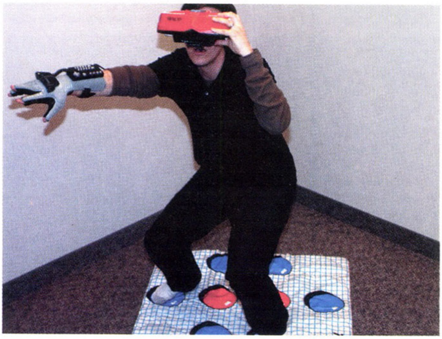
It depends on the brightness setting. On the darkest setting, you'll get 15-19 hours. On the brightest setting (which emits approximately the same amount of light as the sun), it's about 5-8 hours.

NEXT-NEXT-GEN

What do you guys think will be the next big system after the Revolution? I think it might be a virtual reality system.

Fred N.
via the Internet

We recently snuck into Nintendo's research and development facility and managed to snap the following photo before security chased us away. Behold . . . the future!



THAT'S A NEW ESRB DESCRIPTOR

Can you guys show me a picture of an Adults Only-rated game?

Collin E.
via the Internet

Sure thing. Here's a screenshot from the upcoming Clash of the Titans game. It's rated AO for "greased-up hairy chests."

NEW MATH

I'm really anticipating LEGO *Star Wars* II, but when I looked through your review archive, I found that you rated [the original] LEGO *Star Wars* a 6/10. In other words, below average!

Sherwin L.
via the Internet

I am appalled at your Metroid Prime Hunters score. It is an amazing game, and I thought the controls were great and easy to use. You can't give a game a low score just because it doesn't have retro elements.

AJ
via the Internet

We've received quite a few letters like this lately, so we figured it was time to clear the air. When rating a game, we use the entire 10-point scale. Unlike grades in school, a 6/10 is not below average. And though you may think Metroid Prime Hunters deserved an even higher score, an 8.5 certainly shouldn't be considered low. It's a pretty hearty recommendation.

Wii REACTIONS

I've got to hand it to Nintendo; they totally shocked me this morning. I have never said the word "we" more in one day than today. Just as I was totally surprised with the "Rev-mote," or I guess as it's called now, the "Wii-mote," Revolution's final name was totally unexpected. As weird and different as it is, it makes a lot of sense, and I've got to admit, I love it. I only hope that the rest of the gaming community is as open to it as I am. I'm sure that it's going to take a while to sink in for most, but I'm already on the bandwagon. It's so fresh, unique, and fun; it's great.

Paul G.
via the Internet

This is just my initial gut reaction, but Wii is an incredibly lame name. Revolution was more than just a name; it was a mission statement that summed up what the console was capable of. I don't even know what Wii means.

Steve F.
via the Internet

Nintendo was on the right track. They were aiming for the causal gamer with their intuitive controls and old-school game downloads. But then they changed the name to Wii. It's a pun that no casual gamer will understand, and a name that has no impact on its own. Revolution stated what the system was, it's a word with power historically, and it was the battle cry for Nintendo's next system war.

Quinn
via the Internet

I think Wii is a great name for the Revolution. There is no better way for Nintendo to set itself apart than to name the system Wii, because it sounds and looks like Nintendo's intent. You can look at the double "i" in Wii and think, "Wow, that looks just like Chuck Norris beating Mr. T at Metroid Prime 3."

Daemoblin
via the Internet

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MOST WANTED

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>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

1. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2. Baten Kaitos II
3. LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy
4. Super Monkey Ball Adventure
5. Tomb Raider: Legend

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

1. Yggdra Union
2. LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy
3. Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation
4. Metal Slug
5. Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam

>NINTENDO DS

1. New Super Mario Bros.
2. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
3. Final Fantasy III
4. Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin
5. Children of Mana

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Proving once again that Sonic's new home is Nintendo, the GCN version of Sonic Riders has outsold the PS2 and Xbox versions combined.

1. Sonic Riders
2. Naruto: Clash of Ninja
3. Mario Kart: Double Dash!!
4. Super Mario Strikers
5. Super Mario Sunshine
6. Super Smash Bros. Melee
7. LEGO *Star Wars*
8. Mario Party 7
9. Resident Evil 4
10. Need for Speed Underground 2

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

It seems the concept of exploring appeals to a lot of GBA owners. Maybe they should "explore" their local game retailer for a copy of Drill Dozer!

Really?

1. Dora the Explorer: Super Spies
2. Pirates of the Caribbean
3. Pokémon Emerald
4. Monopoly
5. Dogz
6. Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3
7. Risk/Battleship/Clue
8. Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness
9. Chicken Little
10. Yu-Gi-Oh! Ultimate Masters: World Championship Tour 2006

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

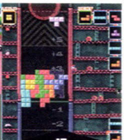
Nintendo's leading ladies take the top two spots on the DS sales chart this month.

1 Metroid Prime Hunters

2 Super Princess Peach

3 Animal Crossing: Wild World

4 Mario Kart DS



5 Tetris DS

6 Pokémon Trozei

7 Nintendogs: Dachshund

8 Nintendogs: Labrador

9 Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time

10 Super Mario 64 DS

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

MANA SIGHTING!

YOSHI'S NEW ISLAND

WHERE'S THE Wii NEWS?
Check Out Pages 32-48
Nintendo's upcoming console, Wii, is such a huge story that we're presenting all the big news about it as a Wii megafeature!

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Dawn of DS Lite

We've had to admire the redesigned handheld from afar for several months as Japanese gamers have snatched it up. Soon North America will see the Lite!

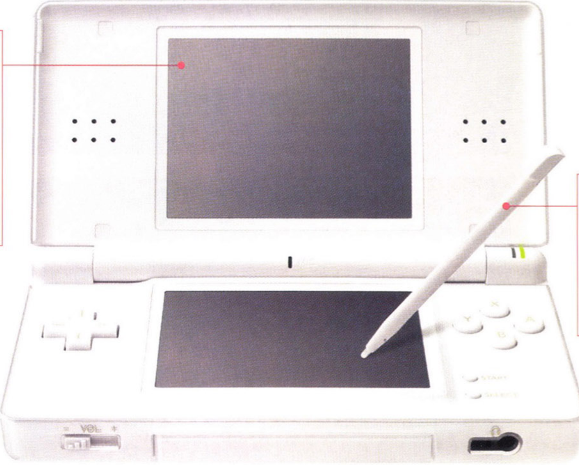
On June 11, you'll finally be able to nab your own DS Lite. The stats made public for the Japan launch in March will come to life in the palm of your hand: It's 20 percent lighter than the original DS and just two-thirds the size, though the screens stay the same. It's also far, far, far brighter (depending on which of four settings you use) than the standard DS. The price will be the same as for the original DS, and the hardware will debut in a sleek white style.

Now that we've gone hands-on with the DS Lite, we can tell you exactly how all that will impact your gaming experience. It's obvious that the four stages of brightness are awesome, but what will strike you most is how games simply glow with life on the DS Lite. That's especially true of titles that use dramatic light and dark contrast, such as Metroid Prime Hunters, where all of the light that radiates from so many things—from computer monitors to bounty-hunter armor—glows on the DS Lite like they're suffused with nuclear power. Simply beautiful.

Although the DS Lite doesn't have any new gameplay functions beyond those of the original DS, it will give you a tighter experience due to all of the subtle design changes; they do more than just make the DS Lite look extremely cool—see below for more redesign highlights. —Steven G.

Focused Control Design Control feels tighter thanks to a centrally placed microphone and higher-placed, more-substantial raised buttons. That, in combination with the smaller Control Pad, benefits thumb control, especially during fast-action games.

Brilliant Lighting
The DS Lite skips a lights-off mode and instead uses the standard DS's lights-on as the starting point. The difference between its dimmest and brightest settings? Like night and day.



Stylus Touches
The longer, slightly thicker stylus has a more natural grip. It slides into the right side of the base, where it's closer at hand.

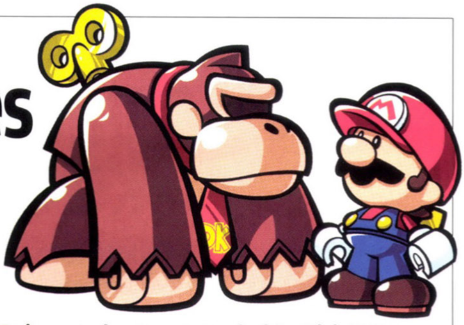
Slimmed Down and Sturdy
When closed, the DS Lite is only slightly thicker than the standard DS's base, but the Lite remains as durable as the original.

Seamless Experience
When not playing a GBA game, you can cover the slot with a lightweight plug-in, making the system more comfortable in your grip.

Utility Where You Want It
Power, Start, and Select are out of the way of your thumbs: Power is a right-side switch; Start and Select are low on the right-side face.

THREE'S COMPANY

Mario Multiplies



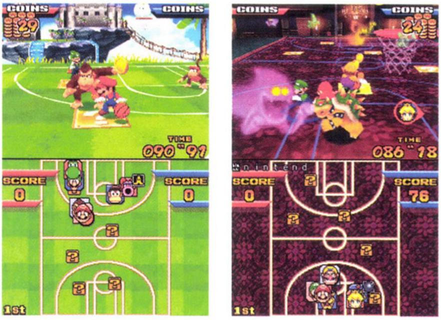
The man with the mustache proves you can't have too much of a good thing with three unique Mario-themed titles.

Three radical new games starring Mario were unveiled recently. Though you may recognize two of the games' titles, each has a personality distinct from any Mario game before it. The first, Super Paper Mario for GCN, is an action-platformer rather than an RPG like its predecessors, though it does have some RPG elements mixed in. Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis for DS breaks tradition as well, putting you in control of the Mini Marios rather than of Mario himself, on a quest to save Pauline. (Yes, that's Pauline from the original 1981 Donkey Kong.) And lastly, Mario Hoops 3-on-3 for DS brings single-player and multiplayer basketball action to the Mushroom Kingdom for the first time. Expect all three titles to be released this fall. —Andy M.

Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis (DS)

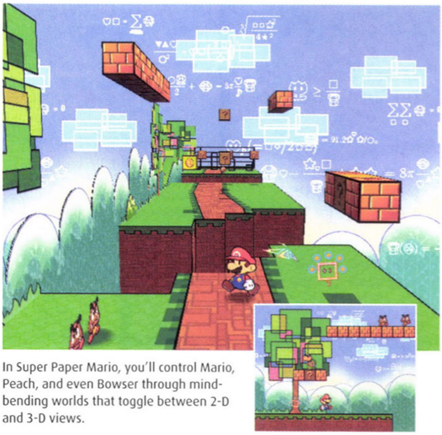
In this DS sequel to Mario vs. Donkey Kong, you'll not only use touch control to guide Mini Marios through Lemmings-esque puzzle levels; you'll be able to create your own levels and trade them over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

Mario Hoops 3-on-3 (DS)



From standard basketball moves like dribbling and passing to Mushroom Kingdom-specific activities such as collecting coins and firing red Koopa shells, everything in Mario Hoops 3-on-3 (developed by famed Final Fantasy creator Square Enix) is achieved using the stylus.

Super Paper Mario (GCN)



In Super Paper Mario, you'll control Mario, Peach, and even Bowser through mind-bending worlds that toggle between 2-D and 3-D views.

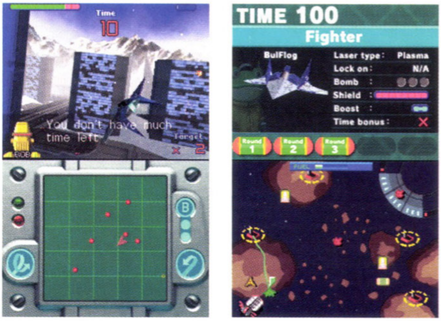
CALLING ANDROSS!

Star Fox Flies Wi-Fi

Fox McCloud & Co. give Star Fox fans what they really want: flying, flying, and more flying—plus wireless dogfights!

Star Fox built a stellar rep during the SNES era as the world's first 3-D console flying game, then earned the respect of N64 pilots as the first Rumble Pak title. From there the series went off course, say Star Fox's devoted fans, who didn't appreciate how Fox's GCN games mixed other types of gameplay with flying.

Star Fox DS will be a return to form. The 100% space-shooter heads back to the Lylat System, as Fox and his team soar through a branching storyline of flight missions. The game will chart a course through 3-D free-roam environments set in space and on planets that present challenges like highrise-choked cities, lava realms, and underwater expanses. But the most thrilling aspect? Wireless matches: SFDS will support battles for up to four players over Wi-Fi and for up to eight over local wireless. —Steven G.



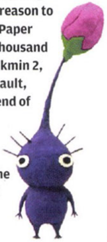
The dual screens put the player in the cockpit, where radar and some flight controls are built into a touch-based dashboard. The lower screen will also let you draw up strategic attack plans to send Fox's team across maps.

QUICK TAKES

Choice Pickings

Four more titles hit the value-priced Player's Choice library.

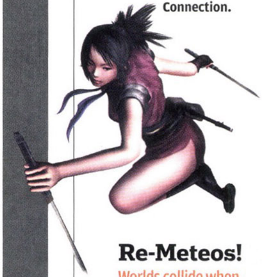
In case you missed their debuts, four great GCN titles are giving you another reason to take a look—Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door, Pikmin 2, Star Fox: Assault, and The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures are joining the value-priced library.



Dual Take on Tenchu

Nintendo makes plans for DS stealth strike.

Stalking foes, planting traps, striking from the shadows—Tenchu: Dark Secret will bring the ninja series to the DS with 40-plus solo missions, 2P wireless battles, and item trading via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.



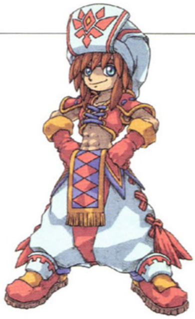
Re-Meteos!

Worlds collide when Disney meets Meteos.

Seriously, it's not one of our gaming gags! Buena Vista is bringing the Wonderful World of Disney together with the world-destroying action of Meteos. The unusual fusion will rock the DS this fall.

JUST THE TICKET

A Vacation Like No Other

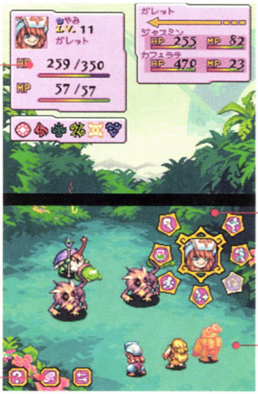


Have RPGs lost their power to take you far away? Magical Vacation could be the perfect getaway.

Role-playing games should be bigger than life, but some RPGs seem so very by-the-book these days. That's less so on the DS, which has invited developers to dream big again—and much less so with Nintendo's Magical Vacation, in the works from the Mana developers at Brownie Brown, who are reaching for the stars with their latest vision.

Most RPGs fall squarely into fantasy or sci-fi territory, but Magical Vacation merges genres in a rare way—you'd have to go back to the days of Flash Gordon flicks to recall such a charming blend of magic and technology. MV's story revolves around the students of the Will O' Wisp magic academy. After a teacher fails to come back from a space mission, the pupils blast off in rockets to find her but get lost themselves throughout the solar system.

That's where you as the hero—or heroine, if you choose—come in. In the single-player quest, you'll touch down on planets in search of the missing teacher and the students, who will each join your party and lend their magical specialty to your team. Though Magical Vacation does rely on RPG standards (gaining experience, leveling up, buying items), Brownie Brown is conjuring an RPG tailor-made for the DS, including six-player wireless dungeons, "egg characters" who travel and grow via Tag mode, and worlds of dual-screen enchantment. —Steven G.

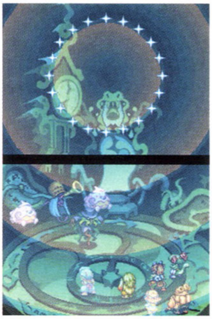


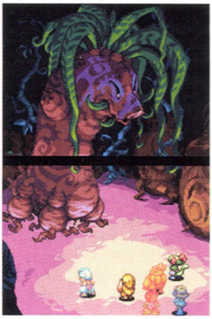
Above the Action
The upper screen shows critical statistics for your currently attacking party member.

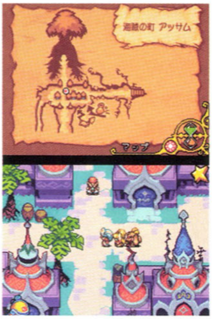
Touch-centric!
The command wheel lets you pick magical attacks, physical strikes, items, defensive moves, and position adjustments.

Cosmic Influence
Monster strength and spell effects are influenced by the position of the planets—which you can quickly check by tapping the Astrolog button.

Inspire the Ranks
To prep each hero, you'll tap a move, then tap an enemy to target. Heroes at the front of the group can use magical and physical strikes, while those in back can use only magic.





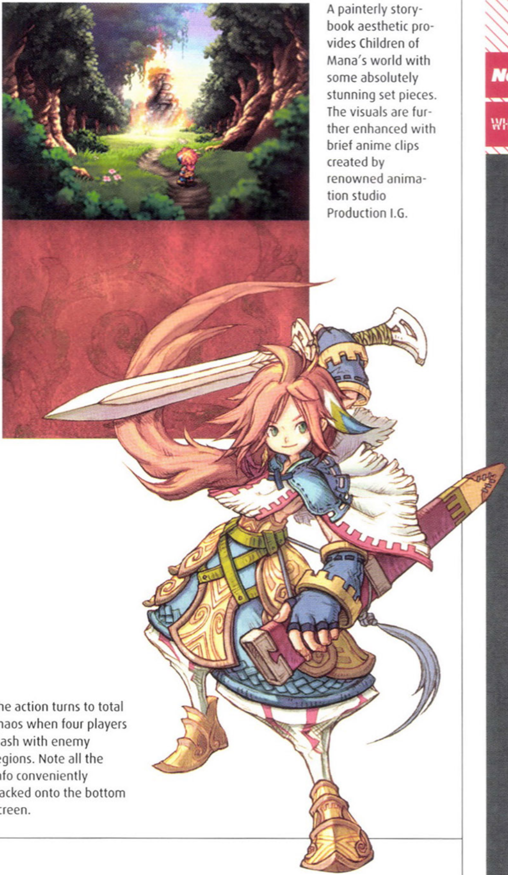


HELLO, CHILDREN

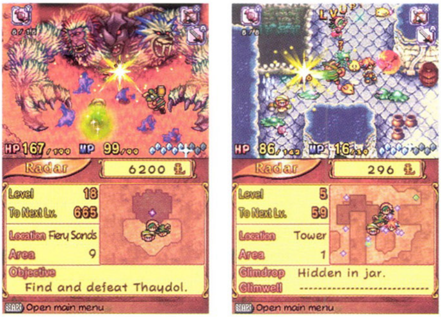
Mana's Boy

Secret no more! Four-player role-playing action highlights the DS installment of Square Enix's legendary Mana series.

With its multiplayer gameplay, great graphics, and excellent combat system, Squaresoft's classic Secret of Mana has been revered by gamers since it was released on the Super NES back in 1993. The same magical gameplay elements have returned in the new DS chapter of the saga, Children of Mana, which was released recently in Japan and is headed stateside in 2006. As with other games in the Mana series (known as Seiken Densetsu in Japan), CoM is set in a world protected by the magic of the Mana Tree, but with evil threatening to corrupt the mighty plant, it's up to the player to save the day via gorgeous top-down action-RPG gameplay. Fortunately, you won't have to do it alone; though you can play through the game solo, you can also experience the entire quest cooperatively (or competitively, if you wish) with up to three other players. As is the norm for the Mana series, eight elemental spirits provide you with attack magic and defensive abilities, plus you'll be able to utilize various weapons types and customize your characters by powering up with magic gems. We hope to have more details on Mana's release shortly. —Chris H.



A painterly storybook aesthetic provides Children of Mana's world with some absolutely stunning set pieces. The visuals are further enhanced with brief anime clips created by renowned animation studio Production I.G.



Level 18
To Next Lv. 665
Location Fiery Sands
Area 9
Objective
Find and defeat Thaydol.

Level 5
To Next Lv. 59
Location Tower
Area 1
Glimdrop Hidden in jar.
Glimwell ---------------------------

The action turns to total chaos when four players clash with enemy legions. Note all the info conveniently packed onto the bottom screen.

BUILD A BETTER BATTLER

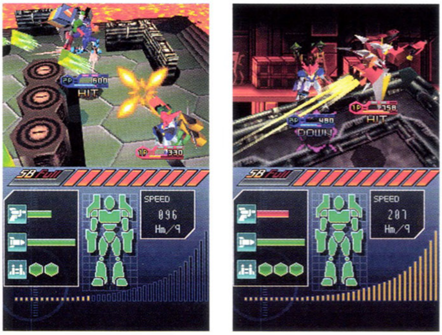
Reality Programming

In DS virtual-reality fighter Custom Robo Arena from Nintendo, two players enter the holosseum, but only one player leaves.

The line between game story and real life blurs in Custom Robo Arena. In the single-player adventure, you assume the role of a young Robo Commander who is set on proving his robot-customizing and battling mettle by entering a tournament in a virtual arena. In real life, you mirror the plight of the Robo Commander by challenging other players to virtual battles via local wireless play or Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

Your customization choices are many. Robot parts include arm guns, bomb launchers, and pod weapons. By tinkering with your creation, you can adjust its attack power, speed, and defensive strength. When it's ready to roll, you send it out into the holosseum and guide it to victory.

The game uses the DS Rumble Pak to make hits to your robo feel real, and download play lets you share the robot-battling experience with friends who don't own the game. —George S.



CATCH 'EM FALL

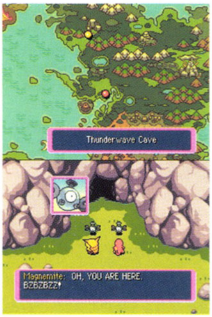
New Pokémon Perspectives

You'll go where no Trainer has gone before when two new games pave the way to the world of Pokémon.

Though the true sequel to Pokémon Ruby and Pokémon Sapphire is far on the horizon, that isn't stopping the Pokémon world from spinning in '06. In fact, it's going to get a lot crazier with two very different styles of Pokémon adventuring.

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon, slated for DS and GBA, will send you on a role-playing adventure not as a Trainer, but as a Pokémon that takes on missions to help other Pokémon in need, and you and your team will explore dungeons that change each time you enter them—great replay value.

Though details on DS title Pokémon Ranger remain scarce, we do know that you'll walk through the adventure on two human feet. The big twist is how you'll catch Pokémon as a Ranger (see below). Expect more on the Pokémon titles, all due in the fall, in months to come. —Steven G.



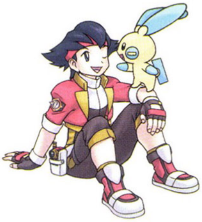
Thunderwave Cave

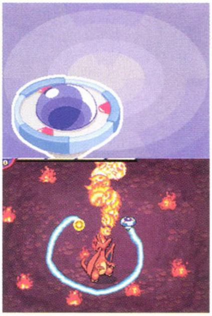
Magnemite: OH, YOU ARE HERE. BZBZBZZ!

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon Blue Rescue Team

In an early version of Pokémon Mystery Dungeon for DS, the upper screen lets you check your team roster and consult a map, which should be very useful—early word is that the quest is wonderfully long and sprawling.

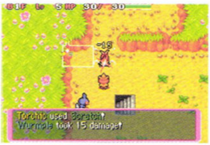
Pokémon Ranger





Instead of throwing a Poké Ball, you'll toss out a high-tech top, then use the DS stylus to spin it in circles around wild Pokémon before they run away.

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon Red Rescue Team



B1F Lv 5 HP 30/ 30

Torchic used Scratch!
Wurmple took 15 damage!

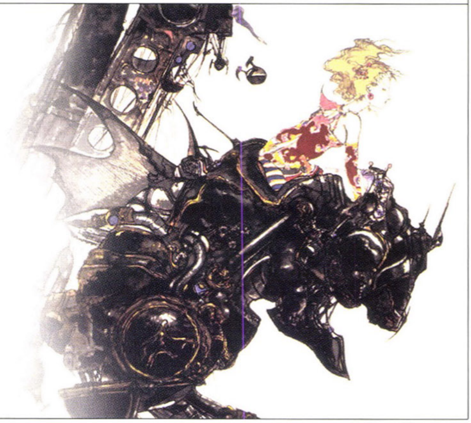
Red Rescue Team for the GBA is almost identical to Blue Rescue Team, minus the second screen.

FANTASTIC VOYAGES

Final and More Final

Fans' fantasies will come true when GBA versions of FINAL FANTASY V and FINAL FANTASY VI come to North America later this year.

Details on the upcoming GBA versions of FINAL FANTASY V and VI were sparse following the games' low-key announcements a few months ago, but now it's official: Nintendo will publish FINAL FANTASY V Advance and FINAL FANTASY VI Advance in North America in the latter half of 2006. As fans of FFV (previously released in North America only on a PlayStation compilation disc) and FFVI (which originally hit the Super NES with the title of FINAL FANTASY III) already know, both games provide fantastic role-playing experiences. FFV is known for its deep class system, while FFVI is recognized for its individualized characters and apocalyptic story. Like other GBA FF ports, both games will feature numerous enhancements, such as new dungeons, new job classes, and more. —Chris H.



GRITTY-GRITTY BANG-BANG

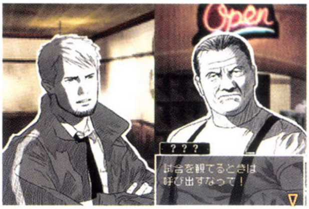
Hotel Booking

An ex-cop will turn Hotel Dusk's Room 215 upside down looking for answers—and you'll turn the DS on its side.

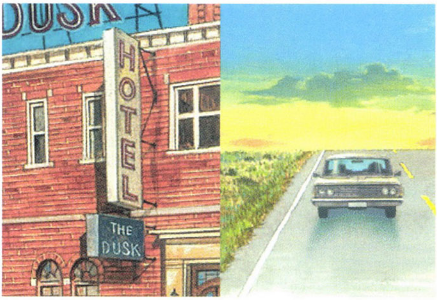
After getting their feet wet on the DS with Trace Memory, the dark minds at Cing have dived into creating a much darker, grittier graphic adventure for Nintendo called Hotel Dusk Room 215. You'll play the game by holding the DS sideways like a book—maybe that's a nod to private-dick novels, since Hotel Dusk, set in 1979 Los Angeles, steeped in the seedy domain more typically explored by crime-fiction writers, not video games.

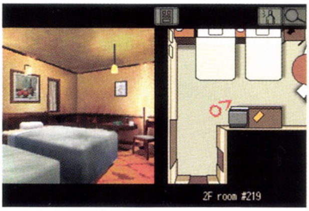
In the hard-boiled adventure, you'll play Kyle Hyde, an ex-cop whose search for a missing bud leads him to the run-down Hotel Dusk. And specifically to the eerie room 215, where (have we entered the Twilight Zone?) wishes are granted. Using the touch screen, you'll grill characters, scour rooms for clues, and solve puzzles using the touch screen.

Though the DS seems perfect for a full revival of the graphic adventure, the dual screen's seen only Trace Memory and Phoenix Wright so far. Could Cing's latest answer the prayers of graphic adventure fans? If whatever's in Hotel Dusk's room 215 is listening, expect an eerie miracle. —STEVEN G.



Former police officer Kyle Hyde will rub elbows with sundry and surly characters in Hotel Dusk Room 215. Hopefully they don't rub him out before he gets some answers.





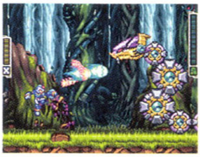
Hotel rooms hold lots of chilling secrets—ask anyone who watches *CSI*. In Hotel Dusk, you'll be able to scrutinize simultaneous 3-D views and top-down maps of rooms.

MEGA MAN . . . AND WOMAN

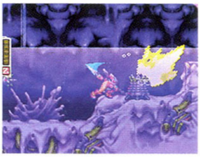
Metal Militia

Living metal weapons take Capcom's blue hero to the next evolutionary level in Mega Man ZX on DS.

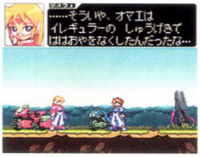
New hardware always yields brand-new takes on Capcom's Mega Man franchise, and in the case of the Nintendo DS, the new twist is finally arriving in the form of Mega Man ZX. Although the game is a side-scroller in the vein of the Mega Man Zero GBA titles, ZX is set several centuries later and stars human heroes—the powerful Vent and his speedy female colleague Aile—instead of robotic Reploids. Living, conscious, data-filled elements called Biometals augment the heroes and transform them into different forms with different powers. The Model X form uses the powers of Mega Man X (such as long-range weapons and wall jumps), while the Model ZX form adds Zero's legendary melee moves to the heroes' arsenal; other forms provide additional skills, such as breaking walls or dashing underwater. Characters can also harness the power of Biometals to activate a temporary powered-up state. In addition to new player abilities, the game adds numerous optional quests, and takes advantage of the DS's functionality by providing access to Cyber Elf power-ups on the touch screen. ZX is set for release this fall. —CHRIS H.



The storyline has changed, but the basic Mega Man formula of destroying rogue mechs remains.



Different Biometals yield different abilities. By transforming into Model ZX, you can use Zero's abilities to slice apart your foes.

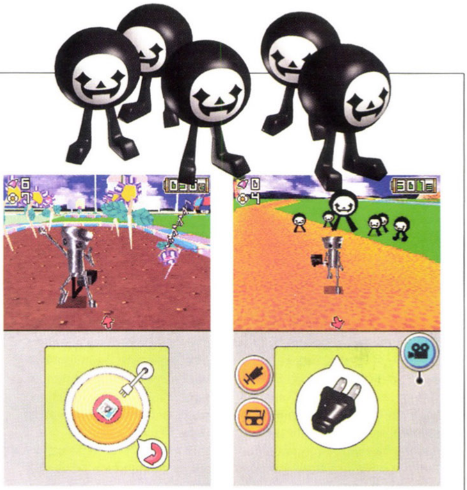


ZX isn't pure action. At times, you'll stay in human form to explore and gather information.

EXPANSION PARK

Roaming Charge

Nintendo's unplug-and-play robot gets out into the world and onto the Nintendo DS in Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol.



The format is small, but the environment is enormous in Chibi-Robo's transition from the GCN to the DS. Park Patrol finds our pocket-sized pal in the great outdoors for recreation and creature combat. Armed with a squirter and persistent charm, the little robot that could washes away 8-ball-shaped baddies at the local park between driving, dancing, and playground sessions.

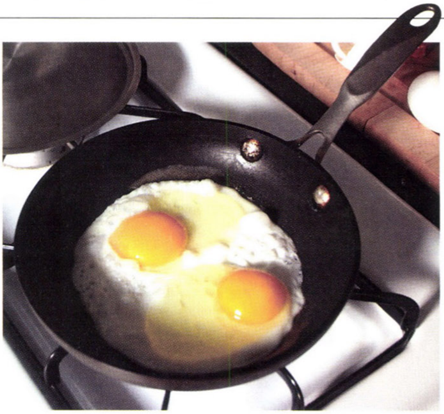
The top screen displays the 3-D action while the bottom screen provides an interface for touch-controlled activity: To propel Chibi's bike, you turn a pedal icon. To steer his buggy, you rotate the steering wheel. To fire the squirter, you operate a plunger. And to get Chibi to dance—promoting growth in the garden—you spin a record.

Chibi's debut adventure has been one of the biggest highlights for the GCN this year. Park Patrol looks to step up the action and broaden the robot's horizons. —George S.

NOW YOU'RE COOKING

Make That to Go

Majesco offers home cooking on the run with Cooking Mama for the DS. Work from dozens of recipes or create your own meals from scratch.



If you're an enterprising student, you may be able to get a Life Studies class credit for playing Cooking Mama. The DS title uses the touch screen to allow you to chop, slice, grate, and mash ingredients, pan-fry your creations on a stove, cool them off by blowing into the mic, and serve them. Once you master the game's 15 starter recipes, you'll begin unlocking as many as 61 additional dishes designed to increase your skills in the kitchen. When you become a top chef, you'll be able to combine recipes to put your signature on the meals. Your dishes can earn you bronze, silver, or gold medals, depending on how well you put them together, but if you prefer not to be judged, you can do your cooking in Practice mode.

The Taito-developed title will launch at a value price by the end of the year. —George S.

DON'T-MISS Calendar

The hot days of summer are usually a cool-down period in the games industry. Not on the dual-screen scene, though, where the DS Lite, several DS games, and Big Brain Academy's crazy Dr. Lobe all see the light of day.

6-5

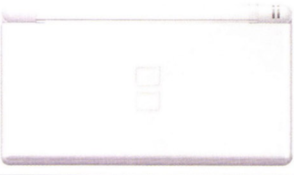
Dual attraction on the DS!

Which grabs you more: puzzle-action titles or brainier games? Nintendo has you covered either way. Magnetica might be the best puzzle game yet (review on page 94), and Big Brain Academy is in a league of its own (check it out on page 79).

6-11

Bright. Brighter. Brightest. And, um, brightest-est. DS Lite shines today.

Four stages of brightness. Lightweight and slimmed down. A smart redesign all around. The DS Lite does so many things right that it's worth pulling out every DS game you've beaten, just to experience 'em again, Lite-style.



6-26

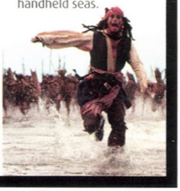
Numbers get crunchier.

If you're a sudoku maniac, you've probably cracked the dozens of number puzzles included with Brain Age. Good news: Nintendo will feed your addiction with 400 more today in Sudoku Gridmaster.

6-27

Take an early voyage with Jack Sparrow.

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest hits theaters on July 7. But it commandeers the GBA and DS a week earlier for high adventure on the handheld seas.

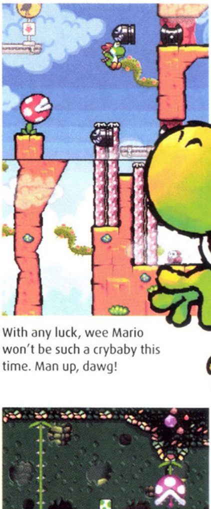


DINO RIDERS

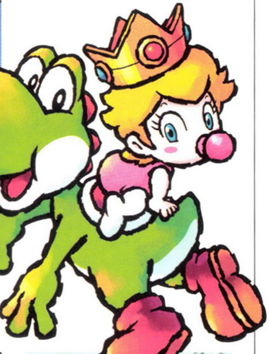
Baby Got Back

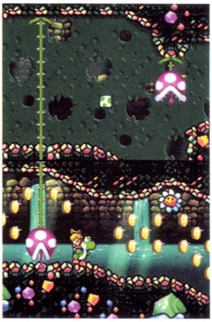
The DS continues to deliver the side-scrolling goods with an all-new sequel to Yoshi's Island.

Hot on the heels of New Super Mario Bros., Nintendo has unveiled the follow-up to another side-scrolling masterpiece starring everyone's favorite plumber. When it rains, it pours, eh? Yoshi's Island 2 reunites Baby Mario with his trusty prehistoric steed on a quest to rescue the heroic toddler's kidnapped classmates. Also along for the ride this time are Baby Peach and Baby Donkey Kong. While clinging to Yoshi's back, each of the infants gives you access to unique abilities; Donkey Kong can swing from vines, and Peach can open her parasol to float through the sky like Mary Poppins (if Mary Poppins rode a voracious green dinosaur). The game's visual style retains the colorful storybook charm of its predecessor, and expanding the view across both screens opens up all kinds of new gameplay possibilities. The release date for Yoshi's Island 2 has not been announced, but rest assured that we'll be keeping a close eye on this one. —Steve T.

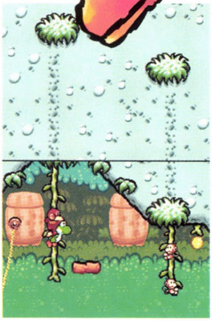


With any luck, wee Mario won't be such a crybaby this time. Man up, dawg!



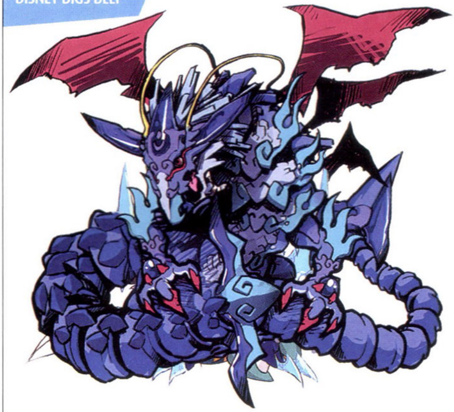


As if Yoshi weren't already the least intimidating dinosaur of all time. . . .



Giant gorillas and dinosaurs—natural enemies—put their differences aside.

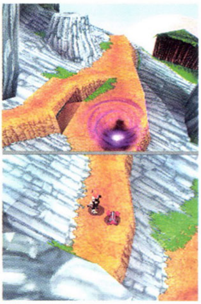
DISNEY DIGS DEEP



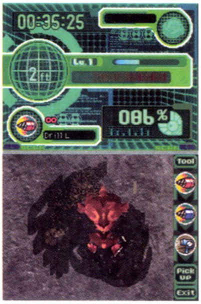
Trobe Probes

Disney publishing group Buena Vista Games introduces Spectrobes, an anime-inspired alien battler on the DS.

Most titles from Buena Vista Games support existing Disney properties, such as Pirates of the Caribbean and Chicken Little, so it's big news when the publisher gets behind an unknown. Given its dynamic art style, strong story, and collect-'em-all gameplay, though, Spectrobes will not remain a secret for long. The action-RPG follows the adventures of junior Interplanetary Patrol officers Rallen and Jeena as they amass an army of Spectrobes to take on the merciless Krawl. The DS's duel screens display double-tall views of the environment and offer loads of information during real-time battles. You recruit the game's 500 creature variations by excavating fossils, then awakening them in a lab. The tools you use for excavation and the sound of your voice during the awakening process determine the creatures' powers and appearance. The game's release date has not been announced—we'll bring you more news when it's available. —George S.



With a two-screen-tall view of the environment, Spectrobes lets you know what you're getting yourself into as you explore.



Fossils are buried deep. You uncover them by using drills, acid, and other tools, then blow away the dust by blowing into the DS's mic.

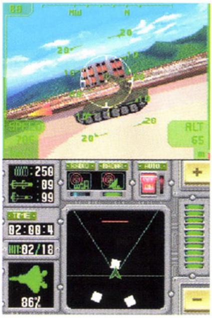
TOP (SCREEN) GUN

Worldwide War Game

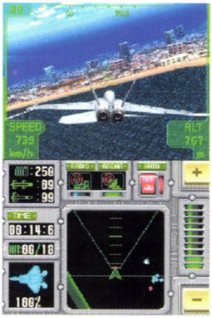
DS Air's flight plan: attack Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection with military precision, and offer cooperative and competitive high-speed air combat.

Paving a highway to the danger zone, Nintendo's DS Air puts you behind the stick of an XF05 strike-fighter wing (among other aircraft) in multiplayer dogfights versus fellow flight enthusiasts, or against the forces of a power-hungry madman in story-based missions. Whether you're going after enemy headquarters, battleships, or other aircraft, you'll be equipped with the right stuff thanks to a customizable weapon loadout. After you take off from the allied aircraft carrier, you'll keep track of your ammo supply, radar, and flight status on the bottom screen, and observe a target-rich environment on the top screen. You can toggle between views of your aircraft and the inside of the cockpit.

Local wireless matches accommodate up to four players for cooperative and competitive play. Planned Nintendo WFC matches take the battle to international airspace. —George S.



A dictator has triggered a global uprising in DS Air. Your mission is to stop him cold.



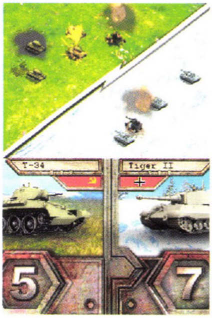
Your choice of aircraft and weapons gives you a fully customizable flight-sim experience.

MAJOR RECOIL

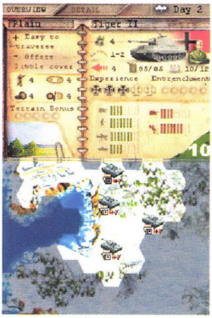
Blitzkrieg Bop

The distant sound of thunder you hear is the approach of Panzer Tactics DS, the first World War II strategy game for the Nintendo DS.

CDV, known for publishing hard-hitting military games for the PC, is bringing its talents to the Nintendo DS for the first time in Panzer Tactics DS. Set in World War II's European Theater, Panzer Tactics DS puts you in charge of one of three armies—German, Russian, or Western Allied forces. The battles are all ripped straight from WWII's most historic moments, capturing the events with over 100 military units and accurate terrain design. The turn-based strategy game features extensive use of the DS's two screens, and allows you to command the action via either the Control Pad or the touch screen. You can also connect up to four systems wirelessly for multiplayer action on specially designed maps, as well. Early signs point to Wi-Fi Connection capability, too—stay tuned for more details. —Chris S.



Similar in style to Advance Wars DS, the combat action is shown in two different views simultaneously.



The dual screen allows for a clear view of the map, while keeping all the other information in one place.

DEEP ADVENTURE

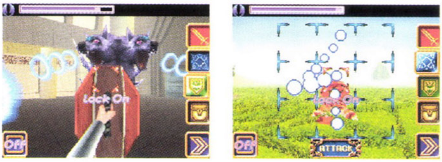
Stylus Slice and Dice

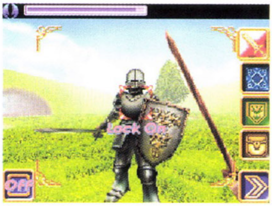
Atlus drops into the fantasy world of Deep Labyrinth, a DS dungeon crawler with an RPG pedigree and touch-controlled real-time battles.

Golden Slimes, a talking platypus, and a fantasy world in need of a hero . . . ah, the RPG—how we love it. Created by Interactive Brains (primarily known for their mobile phone games in Japan) and Harvest Moon developer Marvelous Interactive, and featuring scenario design by Masato Katou (Chrono Trigger, Final Fantasy XI Online), Deep Labyrinth is fantasy gaming to its core.

The DS game follows a present-day boy who gets lost while searching for his parents in a creepy mansion. What he discovers is a world of talking animals and two-screen-tall boss monsters, and a penchant for sword swinging and spellcasting. Attacks are stylus driven—slashing motions for swordplay and simple strokes for magic—and the first-person-perspective navigation on the bottom screen is accompanied by maps on the top screen.

Atlus is set to publish the adventure in North America this fall. —George S.

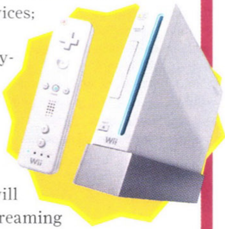




Though you navigate Deep Labyrinth's environments by using the Control Pad, most of the game's other actions, such as magic casting, swordplay and defense, are touch controlled.

The Big News. In Wii.

As NP goes to press, publishers are announcing a major wave of Wii titles in addition to the **Wii games on pages 32 through 48**. Mario isn't the only major mascot making the leap to Wii: **Sonic the Hedgehog** will be blazing onto the new console, though the official title of the long-rumored game and how Sega will run with the Wii controller remain secret.... Atari promises that the Wii version of **Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2**, the latest fighting game for the animated series, will allow players to mimic the popular character moves to pull off combos and attacks.... Konami travels to a bizarre world in **Elebits**, where you'll sneak up on mischievous critters and catch 'em for use as power sources in flashlights and other devices; you'll also use the Wii controller to push, pull, lift, and throw anything in the environment.... EA is opening up Madden to new moves on Wii, but Midway will burn the playbook with **Blitz: The League**—and perhaps you'll want to wear a helmet when you play the Wii version of the bad-boy, rough-and-tumble, arcade-style football game.... Midway isn't catering just to the roughnecks among us with Wii; it'll also bring the first of its new CG movie tie-ins to the console with penguin adventure **Happy Feet** and insect-sized **The Ant Bully**.... Though at this point we can only pray that **Bomberman Land** will go Wi-Fi, we have learned that Hudson Soft's upcoming game will have both Wii-controlled classic action and tons of mini party games.... We've been dreaming of a **Wii flight game** since we got our hands on Nintendo's flight demo months ago, and Hudson will take off in that direction with a still-untitled game that uses a gesture system to allow total plane control, including complex maneuvers like sky acrobatics to bomb drops.... Buena Vista has confirmed that it's got a Wii-quel to its **Chicken Little** game in the works, which will be subtitled Ace in the Hole.... THQ will unleash Nickelodeon's awesome show **Avatar: The Last Airbender** on the Wii console as an adventure with a fast flurry of kung-fu moves and mystic action.... If there's any TV franchise that can go completely insane with Wii possibilities, it's **SpongeBob SquarePants**, so it's great news that THQ's upcoming game, subtitled Creature from the Krusty Krab, will appear on Wii and other Nintendo platforms.... Next-gen versions of **Pixar's Cars** will be arriving several months after the movie's debut; expect THQ to rev up a reengineered Wii ride this fall.... **Metal Slug Anthology** will be a full arcade collection of the long-running action-arcade series, and SNK Playmore pledges that the Wii title will include many surprises. Sounds like an explosive situation, given how full-scale crazy Metal Slug has been since it debuted a decade ago.... —Steven G.

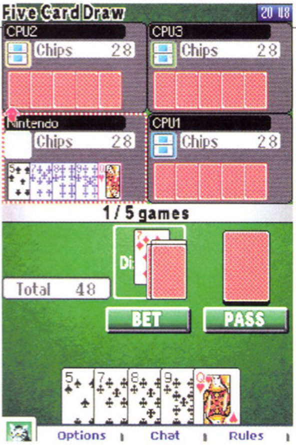


BACKGAMMON IN ACTION

Board No Longer

Wasting time is going wireless with Nintendo's Clubhouse Games, which packs in nearly every truly old-school game in the book.

You can toss out all of those classic games stacked in your closet. No, not your game paks! We mean the tabletop games you haul out when Smash-Bros.-incapable friends visit. Clubhouse Games will stuff board-game classics like chess and checkers plus card games like poker and bridge onto a DS card. They'll be accompanied by leisure games such as bowling, darts and billiards. You'll be able to play the 20-plus games solo on several difficulty levels, and take on up to seven opponents over local wireless via single-card download play. The title will also include an enhanced PictoChat that will let you engage in game-related banter ("Strike!" "King Me!") or good ol'-fashioned trash talk. The most fascinating inclusion in Clubhouse games is a touch-based soda shaking game. Sounds like a great way to get a party started.—Steven G.



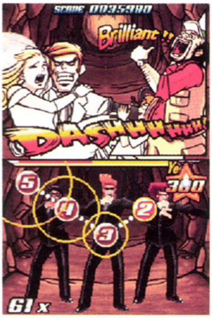
You'll use touch control throughout much of Clubhouse Games. In Five Card Draw, for instance, you'll move cards around the table with the stylus.

KILLER MOVES

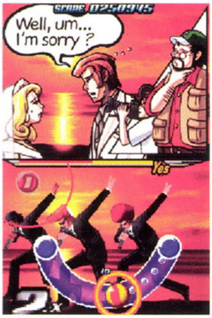
Central Intellidance

DK Bongos titles aside, where have the great rhythm-action games gone? Nintendo sends in the Elite Beat Agents to help you find your groove!

Considering the DS's tap-friendly design, why haven't we seen a Space Channel 5 or a Parappa the Rappa rock the dual screen? Japan got its rhythm-action game last year—Ouendan—and the Nintendo title is considered one of the coolest games on the DS there. North America will see what all the ruckus is about when Nintendo sends Elite Beat Agents our way. An Ouendan sequel of sorts, EBA has a similar concept: When people lose all hope and start to panic, three dudes with crazy dancing skillz and a groovy soundtrack jump in to inspire great things. The player really provides the rhythm mojo by tapping and tracing patterns to stay synched with the beat. Sounds infectious and weird, just the way rhythm-action fans like it. Elite Beat Agents will also move the room with DS download play for up to four local-wireless players. —Steven G.



In one scene, your rhythm will help a movie director find the inspiration to make a great film.



But if your tapping, tracing, and other moves fall out of synch, the scene will end badly for everyone.

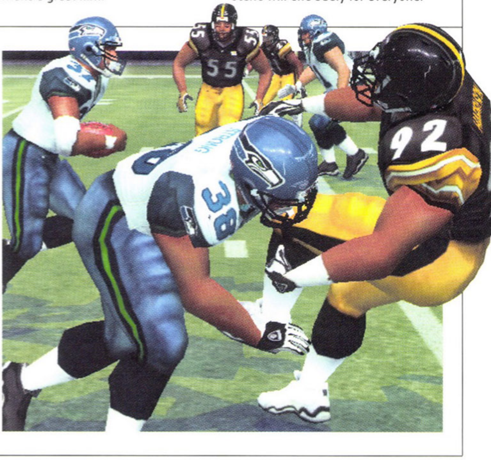
BREAKOUT HIT

Be Like Mack

Seahawks running back Mack Strong spent last season opening holes for Madden NFL 07 cover athlete Shaun Alexander. Now Strong gets his due.

Defender-splitting hits don't make *SportsCenter* normally, but they're crucial for a football team's success. In EA's Madden NFL 07 for GCN, which improves on the running game of previous Madden iterations, you trigger critical hits by the lead blocker (a role that Mack Strong often plays) before control switches to the tailback (Shaun Alexander) for a big run. While you're guiding the ball carrier, you can use the Highlight Stick (C Stick) to take advantage of a new roster of jukes and cutbacks, including moves that are unique to individual star backs.

In addition to the GCN version, EA will ship DS and GBA versions in August, plus a Wii title (see details on page 43) in the fall. The DS game allows you to call audibles by speaking into the handheld's built-in mic. The GBA game includes exclusive minigames. —George S.



DK'S STILL THE KING

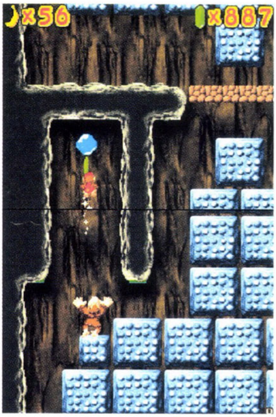
Swing to the Beat

Donkey Kong is using monkey muscle to make the right moves in two swingin' titles: DK King of Swing DS and DK Bongo Blast for the GCN.

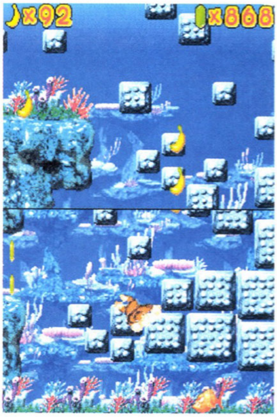
The strong arm of Nintendo is not monkeying around. Donkey Kong stars in two new titles—each with an unusual control scheme that will give your index fingers and biceps a major workout.

With twice the screen real estate of the GBA DK King of Swing title, the DS follow-up gives you a vertical view of the environment so you can see enemies and obstacles before they're on top of you. The original title introduced DK's L-and-R-Button-triggered climbing style. The DS game uses the same method, but now with more moves, and Diddy Kong along for the ride. In multiplayer challenges for up to four, Diddy splits off from DK to do his own climbing, and Dixie and Funky get into the mix. All-new minigames round out the action.

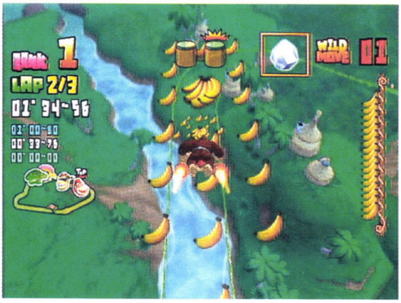
GCN title DK Bongo Blast is a four-player race that also features a cast of DK characters. The vehicles of choice for the race are barrel jets that move to the beat of the DK Bongos. The better your rhythm, the faster your barrel jet will fly, jump and shoot through hoops. The game will also work with the standard GCN controller, but bongo-beating adds an extra element of fun and aerobic exercise. —George S.



In the single-player DK King of Swing DS adventure, Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong work together to deal with King K. Rool's army, and to collect tons of bonus items.



DK will go wherever the bananas are—even underwater. The DS's two screens give you a great view of all the enemies and items in the immediate area.



In DK Bongo Blast, the monkey and his pals fly through five worlds full of crazy courses. The twist is that you can make the barrel jets move by beating the DK bongos in rhythm.

Wi-Fi
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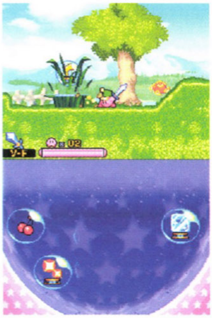
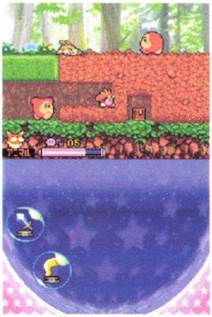
INSIDE KIRBY

A Belly Full of Ability

Long known for his appetite and copy abilities, Kirby mixes creature powers in an all-new side-scrolling DS adventure.

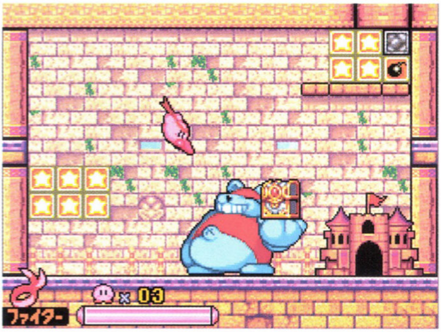




Though simple working title Kirby may not stick for the happy hero's upcoming DS title, new abilities are sticking to the character's ribs. When Kirby picks up bubble-encased powers, they drop into his stomach (displayed on the touch screen), giving you the opportunity to combine them to make new powers. The results are often comical, and always surprising.

Kirby's previous DS adventure, Canvas Curse, used the DS stylus as a brush that painted platforms for the hero. The new title uses a more classic control scheme to guide the little guy through a side-scrolling environment that is packed with creatures and activities like never before. For the first time, Kirby can change the environment using his creature-borne powers by, for example, freezing water with his Ice ability and burning barriers with his Fire ability.

The game will blaze a trail to the DS later this year. —George S.



Kirby will have new foes to flatten: a full-scale infestation of thieving mice.

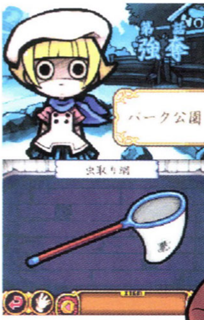
FROM TRAUMA TO DRAMA

Quirky Case Load

Atlus, the publisher that brought us surgical sim Trauma Center, tackles another high-stress profession—crime solver—for Touch Detective.

A stolen dream, a missing person, and a mushroomlike creature named Funghi make for a strange and comical story-based adventure in Atlus's Touch Detective. In a press release, the company's project lead, Jamie Ortiz, said the game has "wonderfully unique character design, a great sense of humor, and a ton of challenging puzzles." To solve the puzzles, which are spread out over four long cases, you must use the touch screen to explore environments, gather evidence, talk to witnesses, and manipulate a large collection of items. The more items you find and clues you ferret out, the closer you will be to uncovering the entire story and learning how all of the game's cases fit together.

The mystery will begin to unravel when the game launches this fall. —George S.



Nets are not standard detective equipment, but Touch Detective is not your average mystery game.

GAME WATCH FORECAST

We'll add Wii games to Forecast soon. For now, get a sense of the very busy year ahead just on the DS, GBA, and GCN systems alone. There has never been a better time to be a gamer.

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title — Publisher — ●●●
Game Title — Publisher — ●●● —New games added to the list

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
The Ant Bully	Midway	●●○
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●●○
Backyard Baseball 2007	Atari	●●○
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Backyard Football 2007	Atari	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Baten Kaitos Origins	Nintendo	●●○
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●○○
Cars	THQ	●●○
DK Bongo Blast	Nintendo	●●○
Eragon	Vivendi	●○○
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball	Activision	●○○
The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy	Midway	●●○
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Madden NFL 07	EA	●●○
Major League Baseball 2K6	2K Sports	●●●
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
The Movies	TBD	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Nicktoons*	THQ	●○○
Over the Hedge	THQ	●●●
Pac-Man World Rally	Namco	●●○
Spongebob Squarepants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●●○
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Sega	●●○
Super Paper Mario	Nintendo	●●○
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	Ubisoft	●●○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○
X-Men: The Official Game	Activision	●●●
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Fury	Namco Bandai	●○○

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	THQ	●○○
The Ant Bully	Midway	●●○
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●○○
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Battle B-Daman	Atlus	●●○
Battle B-Daman 2	Atlus	●○○
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●○○
Camp Lazlo	Crave	●○○
Cars	THQ	●●○
Danny Phantom Urban Jungle	THQ	●○○
Eragon	Vivendi	●○○
Final Fantasy V Advance	Square Enix	●○○
Final Fantasy VI Advance	Square Enix	●○○
Flushed Away	D3PA	●○○
Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends	Crave	●○○
The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy	Midway	●○○
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	American Game Factory	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●○○
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Madden NFL 07	EA	●○○
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Falzar & Cybeast Gregar Versions	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
My Little Pony*	THQ	●○○
Naruto 2*	Tomy/D3PA	●○○
Nicktoons*	THQ	●○○
Over the Hedge	THQ	●●●
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●●○
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team	Nintendo	●●○
The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Spongebob Squarepants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●○○
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story	Atlus	●●○
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	Atlus	●○○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation	Atlus	●●○
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	Atlus	●○○
Superman Returns: The Videogame	EA	●○○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
Tonka*	THQ	●○○
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Activision	●○○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
Unfabulous	THQ	●○○
VeggieTales: LarryBoy and the Bad Apple	Crave	●○○
Winx Club: Shadow of the Phoenix	Konami	●●○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
X-Men: The Official Game	Activision	●●●
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○
Yggdra Union	Atlus	●●○

NINTENDO DS

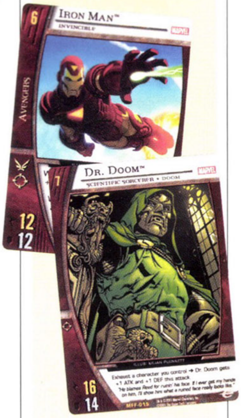
Game Title	Publisher	●●●
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	THQ	●●○
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●○○
Big Brain Academy	Nintendo	●●●
Boktai*	Konami	●○○
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●●○
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●○○
Break 'em All	D3PA	●●○
Cars	THQ	●●○
Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin	Konami	●○○
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol	Nintendo	●●○
Children of Mana	Square Enix	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
Clubhouse Games	Nintendo	●●○
Contact	Atlus	●●○
Cooking Mama	Majesco	●○○
Crash Boom Bang!	Vivendi	●●○
Custom Robo Arena	Nintendo	●●○
Danny Phantom Urban Jungle	THQ	●○○
Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom	Konami	●●○
Deep Labyrinth	Atlus	●●○
Dino Master	Majesco	●●●
DK King of Swing DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime	Square Enix	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters	Square Enix	●○○
DS Air*	Nintendo	●●○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●●○
Elite Beat Agents	Nintendo	●●○
Eragon	Vivendi	●○○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Flushed Away	D3PA	●○○
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Harvest Moon DS	Natsume	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*	D3PA	●●○
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
Hotel Dusk: Room 215	Nintendo	●●○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Madden NFL 07	EA	●○○
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	Namco	●●○
Magical Vacation*	Nintendo	●●○
Magnetica	Nintendo	●●●
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Mario Hoops 3-on-3	Nintendo	●●○
Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis	Nintendo	●●○
Marvel Trading Card Game	Konami	●●○
MechAssault: Phantom War	Majesco	●●○
Mega Man ZX	Capcom	●●○
Meteos: Disney Edition	Buena Vista	●○○
Micro Machines v4	Codemasters	●●○
Miss Spider: Harvest Time Hop and Fly	American Game Factory	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Bomber	Majesco	●○○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
New Super Mario Bros.	Nintendo	●●●
Nicktoons*	THQ	●○○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Over the Hedge	THQ	●●●
Panzer Tactics DS*	CDV Software	●○○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●●○
Point Blank DS	Namco	●●○
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team	Nintendo	●●○
Pokémon Ranger	Nintendo	●●○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
Spectrobes	Buena Vista	●●○
Spongebob Squarepants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●○○
Star Fox DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	Bethesda	●●○
Steel Horizon	Konami	●○○
Sudoku Gridmaster	Nintendo	●●○
Superman Returns: The Videogame	EA	●○○
Tenchu: Dark Secret	Nintendo	●●○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Activision	●●○
Top Gear: Downforce	Kemco	●○○
Touch Detective	Atlus	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Winx Club: Shadow of the Phoenix	Konami	●●○
World Soccer Winning Eleven*	Konami	●○○
X-Men: The Official Game	Activision	●●●
Xiaolin Showdown	Konami	●●○
Yoshi's Island 2*	Nintendo	●●○

* Tentative title

ALL DECKED OUT

MARVEL MADNESS

With characters from the X-Men, the Avengers, and every other corner of the Marvel Universe, Konami's DS adaptation of the Marvel Trading Card Game has sounded promising since its announcement a few months ago. Expect all the rules of the actual card game, along with multiple modes and online play, when it hits this fall.


6
Iron Man™
Invincible
MARVEL
Avengers
12
12
7
Dr. Doom™
Scientific Sorcerer • Doom
MARVEL
Exhaust a character you control → Dr. Doom gets +1 ATK and +1 DEF this attack.
16
14
MFF-015

HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

SNK Playmore is giving its excellent card-battling game another go in the form of SNK vs. Capcom Cardfighters DS, coming this fall. As in the original NeoGeo Pocket Color version, this edition offers an RPG-like single-player mode and a two-player versus mode with cards that feature characters from SNK's and Capcom's vast stables of games.

初期デッキ1
決定
もどる
ソート
ソートリスト
カードナンバー
レアリティ
HP
特殊効果
BP
登場コスト
属性
退出コスト
新規獲得カード
OK
DECK
CARD

発動タイミング
属性 赤
レアリティ D
登場コスト 白 1
退出コスト 赤 1
特殊コスト
1番目のカード
これはテストカードで
SNKキャラ0001最大16文字

From Pac-Man to FFIII to Mega Man, the franchise players are out in full force.

Alex Rider: Stormbreaker Pg. 29
Barnyard Pg. 30
FINAL FANTASY III Pg. 26
Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: The Genie & The Amp Pg. 29
Mega Man Battle Network 6 Pg. 30
Pac-Man World Rally Pg. 28
Point Blank DS Pg. 27
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story Pg. 28
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation Pg. 27

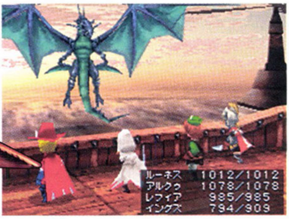
Be the Three

>FINAL FANTASY III

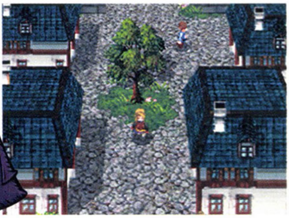
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX
DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX RELEASE: FALL 2006

The folks at Square Enix stopped by recently to give us a little hands-on time with the new FINAL FANTASY III for DS. We learned two things: one, the fully 3-D graphics look totally amazing; and two, we'll have to wait to learn pretty much everything else about the game. That's okay by us—based on what we saw, we're not worried in the least. The true FFIII has never come out in North America (the game we called FFIII for SNES was FFVI in Japan), but our reward for waiting over 15 years will be a souped-up reimagining of the million-seller in Japan. The new version uses the same story, monsters, and locations as the original, but all of the visuals have been built from scratch to maximize the graphical power of the DS. And when we saw it, the game was headed toward being playable entirely with the control pad and stylus. A lot of other information is still under wraps: Will it use Wi-Fi? Will there be bonus content and areas beyond the Japanese original? Where can we find Cid? We hope to have these questions and many more answered over the coming months. —CHRIS S.

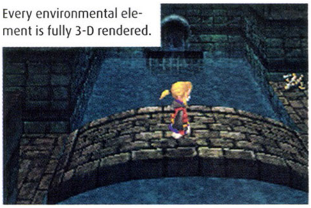
Brand-new cinematics highlight the DS version.

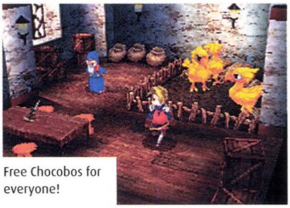


ルーネス 1012/1012
アルクゥ 1078/1078
レフィア 985/985
イングズ 794/909

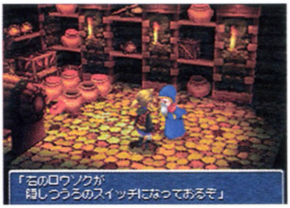


Every environmental element is fully 3-D rendered.





Free Chocobos for everyone!



「右のロウソクが
隠しつうろのスイッチになっておるぞ」

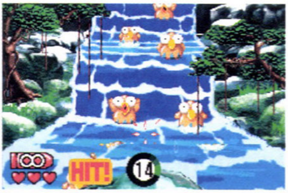
Quick and to the Point

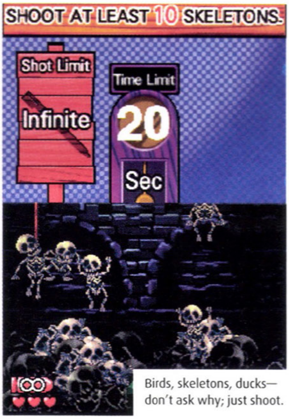
>POINT BLANK DS

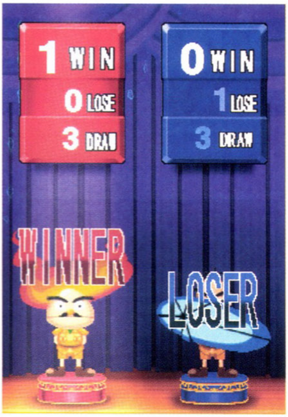
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI
DEVELOPER: NAMCO BANDAI • RELEASE: SUMMER 2006

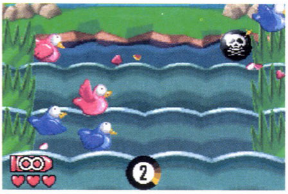
Namco's classic shooting series, Point Blank, is trading in its light gun for a stylus. In Point Blank DS, you'll play through the game's 40 fast-paced stages by tapping the screen frantically to take out your targets. Though all stages have you racing the clock to meet a quota, each level is quite different. You'll shoot anything from cardboard criminals to flying bunnies, and partake in a smorgasbord of activities ranging from fast-paced shoot-outs to analytical number-matching. On one stage, two landscapes scroll by while you try to identify and shoot the discrepancies between the two. In addition to a number of difficulty levels and gameplay modes, Point Blank offers a wireless multiplayer mode that lets you go head to head against a friend, using only one game card (via download play).

Fans will be glad to know that the series' DS debut is a gallery of all things Point Blank; it incorporates stages from the original arcade hit and all three versions of the console game, each revamped to fit the new point-and-shoot format. Expect the DS shooting gallery to open for business in North America this summer. —ANDY M.









Birds, skeletons, ducks—don't ask why; just shoot.

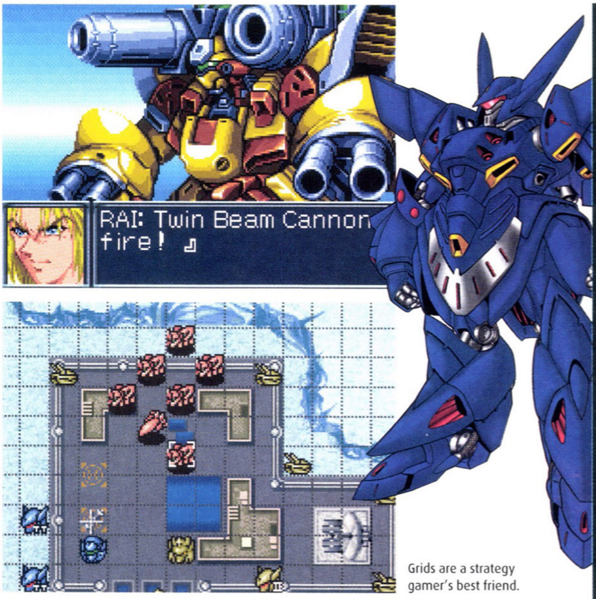
It's Robot Fightin' Time

>SUPER ROBOT TAISEN: ORIGINAL GENERATION

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: ATLUS
DEVELOPER: BANPRESTO • RELEASE: SUMMER 2006

Despite more than 15 years of tremendous popularity in Japan (where people properly revere all things giant robot), the Super Robot Taisen series has never appeared on North American shores. That will finally change this year when the busy folks at Atlus deliver not one but two installments of the turn-based strategy franchise. And after spending some time with the first, it's easy to see what all the fuss is about. The game allows for tons of customization: You can equip each mech with a variety of weapons and specialized parts, then upgrade them with the money you earn during battle. You'll also accrue experience points that you can spend to train your pilots and teach them new abilities. It's all a bit overwhelming at first, but once you learn the ropes, tinkering with your robots becomes pretty addictive. The game's anime-inspired story seems intriguing as well, and boasts a different branch for each of the two protagonists.

Atlus promises a 40-hour adventure, which should keep armchair generals busy until the sequel arrives this fall. —STEVE T.



RAI: Twin Beam Cannon, fire!

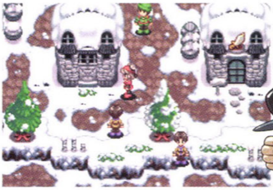
Grids are a strategy gamer's best friend.

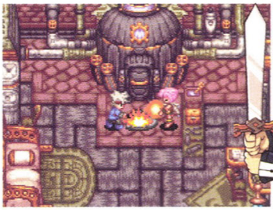
A Night to Remember

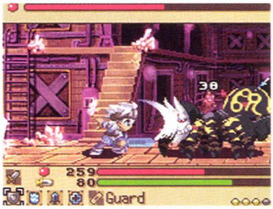
>SUMMON NIGHT: SWORDCRAFT STORY

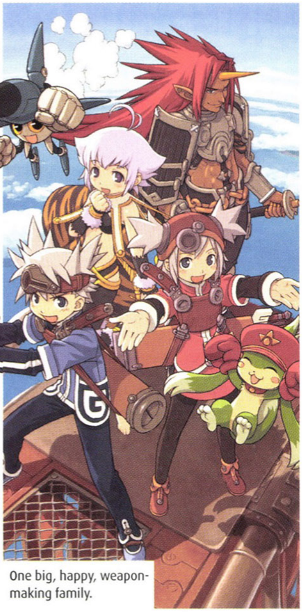
PLATFORM: **GBA** • PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **FLIGHTPLAN** • RELEASE: **JUNE 2006**

When you hear the term "Guardian Beast," you probably don't envision a pink-haired babe named Sugar—who wants to marry you, even if your character is a girl—but that's exactly what you get in Summon Night: Swordcraft Story. At least, that's one of the options, alongside a little robot that speaks unintelligible gibberish, a fiery horned warrior, and a cute green critter. Whichever you end up with, you're going to need its help. As the child of legendary Craftlord Shintetsu (who disappeared three years ago), you have a lot to accomplish to follow in your father's footsteps; good thing the Guardian Beasts are there to provide magical support and help you create weapons as you compete against other wannabe Craftlords, undergo the trials of the city's subterranean labyrinth, and engage in extracurricular activities like fighting unscrupulous guilds. A side-view real-time combat system and the ability to make dozens of weapons in five categories (swords, axes, spears, knuckles, and drills) are helping to forge Summon Night into a very promising action-RPG. —CHRIS H.

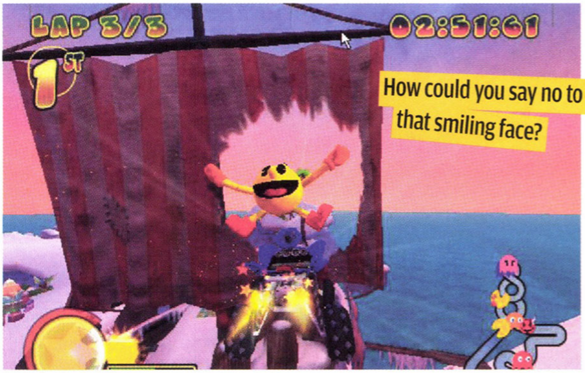




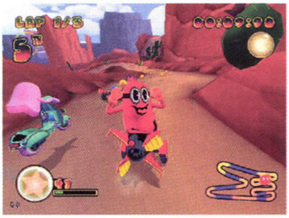


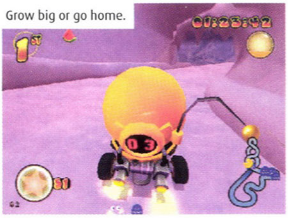


One big, happy, weapon-making family.



How could you say no to that smiling face?





Grow big or go home.

Pellet-Powered

>PAC-MAN WORLD RALLY

PLATFORM: **GCN** • PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **SMART BOMB INTERACTIVE**
RELEASE: **SUMMER 2006**

Considering how many twists and turns the Pac-Man franchise has taken, it's not particularly surprising that the famed pellet-chomper has finally taken the wheel in a kart-racing game. Skeptics will say Pac-Man World Rally was made just to keep the brand alive, but what we've seen is much better than that. For one, the developers have stuffed as much Pac-flavor into the game as one could imagine, such as collecting enough yellow pellets to turn into a giant Pac-Man and gobble up your opponents, or grabbing fruit and other themed items to hamper rival racers. Furthermore, the original Pac-Man music has been arranged to fit each level's motif; for instance, a spooky organ riff matches the haunted-house level. And if the graphics and racer AI keep coming along smoothly, World Rally should silence the skeptics until Pac's next adventure. —CHRIS S.

Axe to Grind

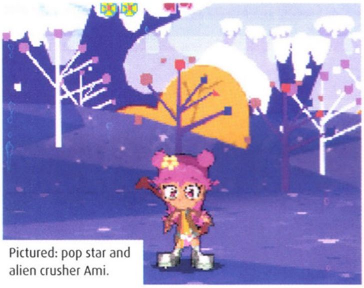
>HI HI PUFFY AMIYUMI: THE GENIE & THE AMP

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: D3 PUBLISHER OF AMERICA
DEVELOPER: SENSORY SWEEP • RELEASE: JUNE 2006

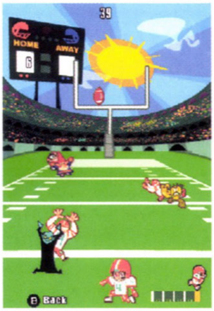
Guitar heroines Puffy AmiYumi are going on a foe-crushing rampage Final Fight-style in D3PA's The Genie & The Amp. With a guitar as your weapon, you use the touch screen to strum out attacks while the J-Pop duo pulls off guitar-flinging moves that match your chords. If you're all thumbs, you can play the same notes by tapping the A, B, X, and Y Buttons. Four- and-five-note combinations send the pair into a guitar-smashing rage that would put an old-school grunge rocker to shame.

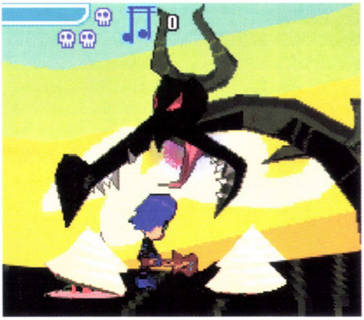
The backdrop for the bad-guy bashing is a tour through time during which Ami and Yumi pick up instruments for their rock-act. The tour's 10 stops include present-day Japan, the wild west, and olden-days England. The locations show off stylized art that is in keeping with the pair's Cartoon Network show.

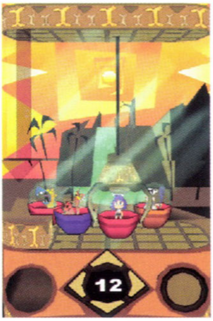
Though we've seen our share of bash-and-brawl side-scrollers, this one- or-two player adventure is more than just another fighter. Between-level minigames let you operate a crane machine to nab prizes, and prepare sushi using touch control. The animated antics begin in June. —GEORGE S.

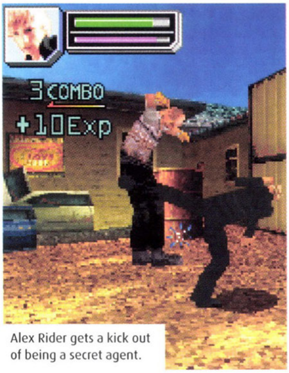


Pictured: pop star and alien crusher Ami.

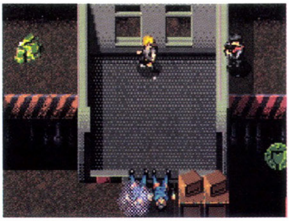


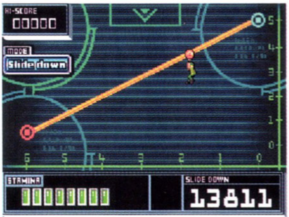


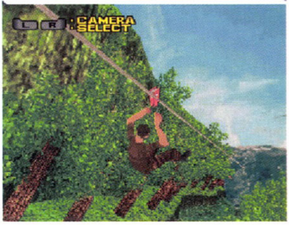


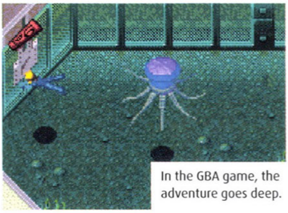


Alex Rider gets a kick out of being a secret agent.









In the GBA game, the adventure goes deep.

Breakin' Two

>ALEX RIDER: STORMBREAKER

PLATFORM: DS, GBA • PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: ALTRON, RAZORBACK • RELEASE: JULY 2006

Teen wizard Harry Potter has made a successful transition from books to movies and video games. Now it's the teen spy's turn. After sales of more than nine million books, the Alex Rider series is headed to the big screen, the DS, and the GBA this summer with Alex Rider: Stormbreaker.

The games tell the story of average-kid-turned-MI6-agent Alex from two different perspectives. The GBA game displays a top-down view of locations such as Darius Sayle's complex and the MI6 training facility, and sends you on tasks to find items, defeat enemies, and uncover plot points.

With a 3-D view on the top screen, along with map, status, and item information on the bottom screen, the DS game offers more of a focus on hand-to-hand combat and the use of Alex's super-agent gadgets. It also has eight minigames that you can unlock during the adventure, then select from a menu. Alex uses a DS in the movie; now you can help him complete his mission with your own DS. —GEORGE S.

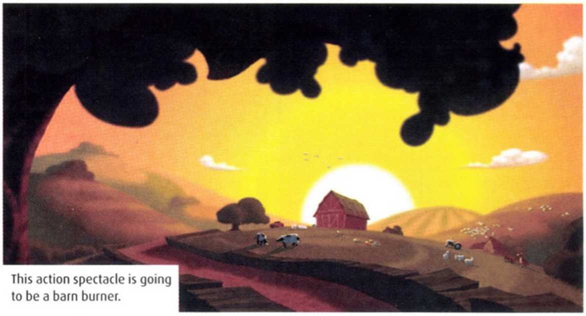
Udder Chaos

>BARNYARD

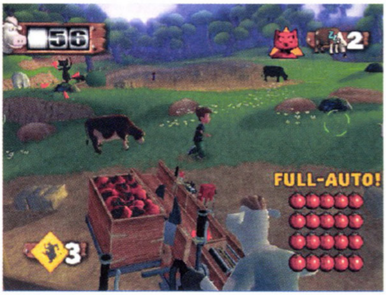
PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: THQ AUSTRALIA • RELEASE: JULY 2006

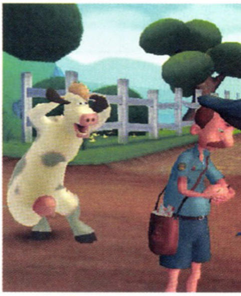
What do animals do when humans aren't watching? If you believe THQ's Barnyard, they walk on their hind legs, ride bikes, drive cars, and play a lot of minigames. The single-player adventure, loosely based on the plot of the new CG film, puts you in the hooves of a new heifer on a farm where the livestock acts as human as the farmers. Rubbing elbows with head cow Ben and his son Otis, Miles the mule, Duke the dog, and a pig called Pig, you learn about life in the barnyard and go on missions that will give you access to new areas. The animals spring into action when the farmer is away during the day and when he's asleep at night. Your missions vary depending on the time of day.

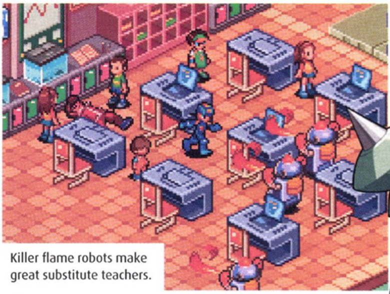
Some missions put you into minigames which, upon completion, become available for multiplayer activities that are suitable for up to four participants. Among the most inspired games are Joy Ride, in which you buzz over the landscape in the farmer's pickup; Tease the Mailman, which has you making uncowlike poses when the mailman has his head turned; and Milk Bar, a moo-juice-serving game inspired by arcade classic Tapper. You'll never look at barnyard animals the same way again. —GEORGE S.



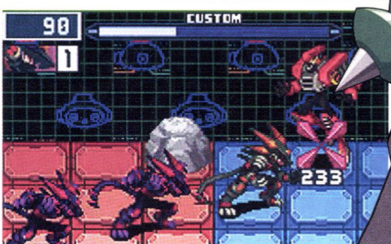
This action spectacle is going to be a barn burner.

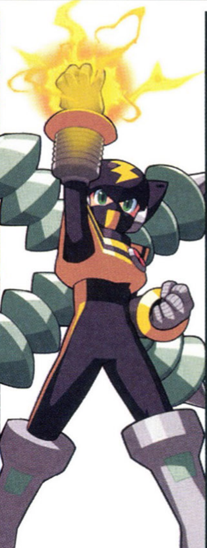






Killer flame robots make great substitute teachers.



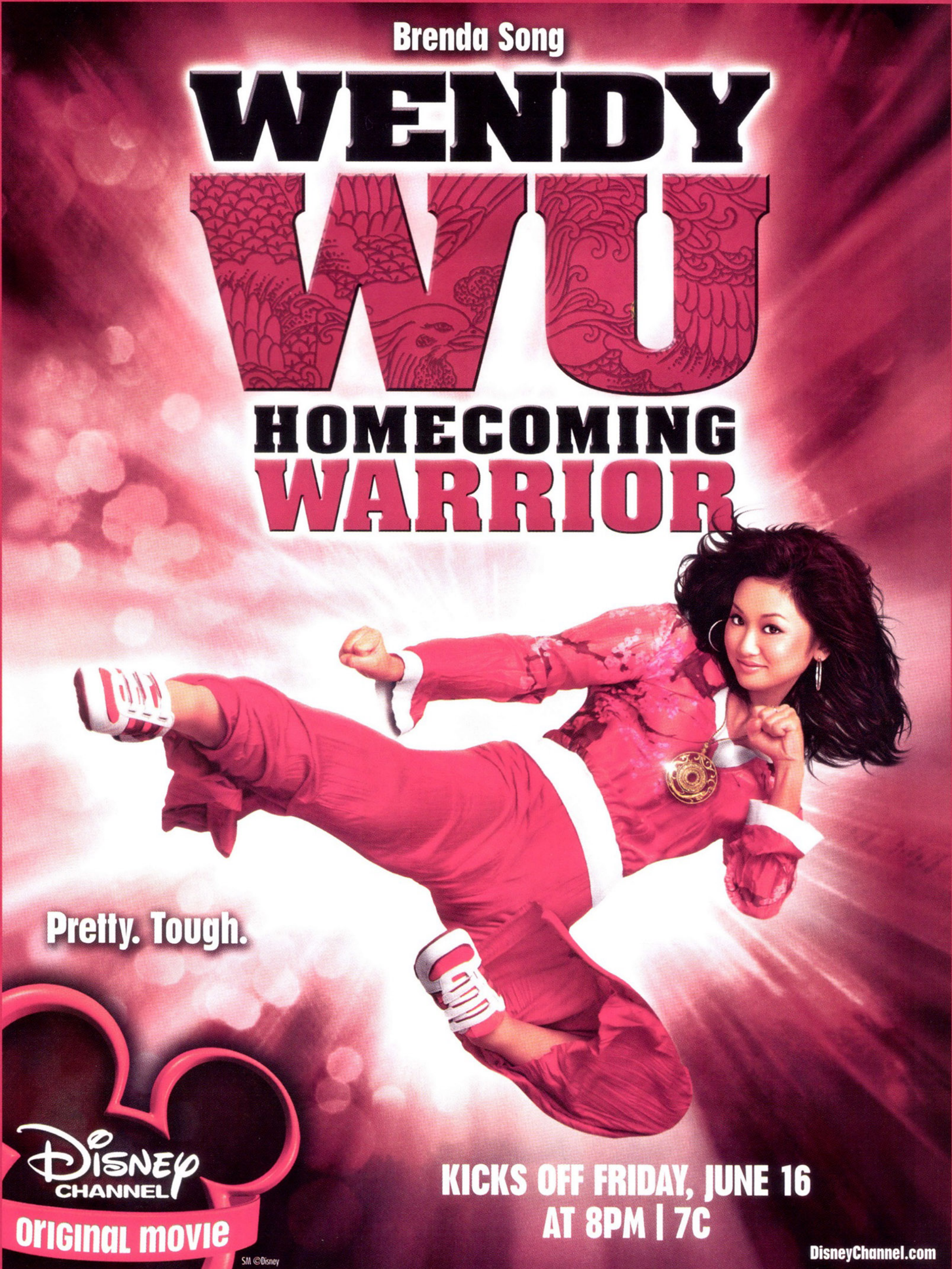


The Joy of Six

>MEGA MAN BATTLE NETWORK 6

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • RELEASE: JUNE 2006

When Mega Man Battle Network 6 begins, it seems just like previous games in the series—featuring a virtual Mega Man who fights computer viruses via strategic real-time battles—but it doesn't take long before things get shaken up. Mega Man's owner, Lan, moves to a new city, and with it come new environments and new characters (both playable and nonplayable). Of course, there's another shady organization up to no good, and when it wakes two legendary, all-powerful Cybeasts—Gregar the wolf and Falzar the bird—Mega Man's only course of action is to take one into his own body. By merging with the Cybeast (the one you get corresponds to whether you're playing the Cybeast Gregar or Cybeast Falzar version of the game), you can "BeastOut" with enhanced speed, strength, and other abilities. If Mega Man combines the Cross System (which lets him gain new powers by merging with other Net Navis) with the BeastOut, the combat options become nearly limitless. It all adds up to the deepest Battle Network game yet. —CHRIS H.



Brenda Song

WENDY WU

HOMECOMING WARRIOR

Pretty. Tough.

DISNEY CHANNEL

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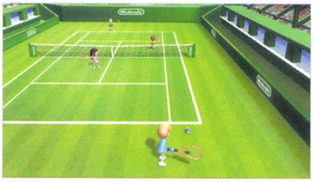
We've taken the whirlwind tour of Wii titles, and all there is to say is, "Wow!"



Serve

Wave

Point

Rumble

Listen

Swing

Fastball
82mph

The Wii EXPERIENCE

Are Wii having fun yet? You bet. Nintendo's next console gives you a direct connection to the game, opening the way for interaction at a new level. It looks great. It plays great. And, yeah, it's a whole lot of fun.

By George Sinfield

It's been the buzz of the industry since Nintendo revealed the innovative controller functionality at TGS. Now, tens of thousands have played demos of Wii games at E3, and the buzz continues to grow. We've taken the whirlwind tour of Wii titles, and all there is to say is, "Wow!" Of course, we will be a little more verbose in this overview of recently announced games, including Ubisoft's FPS Red Steel and Activision's latest skating feat, Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam.

EXPRESS YOURSELF

When you power up the Super Mario Galaxy E3 demo, and the newly minted logo for the console formerly known as Revolution fades into view, Nintendo's mustachioed icon releases a gleeful "Whee!" Mario's tip of the cap to the console's name reminds us that Nintendo knows how to have fun. The key to a fun, engaging, "whee"-inducing playing experience—the Rosetta Stone that translates programming and polygons to energizing entertainment—is the innovative Wii controller, which lets players put so much of themselves into the game. By taking the emphasis off of rigid button-pressing and Control Stick manipulation, Wii gives everyone the freedom to wave, turn, twist, point, swing, and shake; to let go and have a great time as they connect with the gaming world.

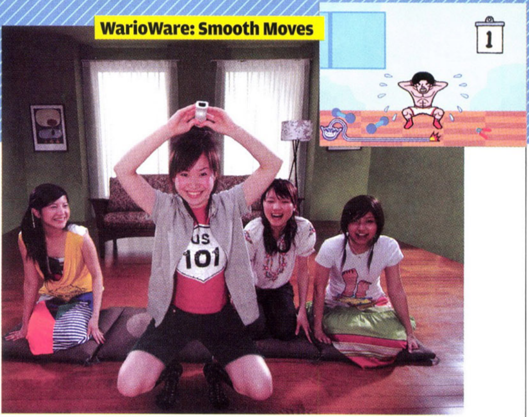
The poster child for free expression in Wii control is WarioWare: Smooth Moves. The WarioWare games (especially the GBA's tilt-sensitive Twisted! and the DS's tap-and-slice-driven Touched!), have a history of embracing creative control. As the microgames fly by at a crazy-fast pace, the fun is in figuring out how to use the controls to reach the game's goals. Smooth Moves starts every microgame with the name and a line illustration of a recommended way to hold the controller, then leaves it up to you to figure out how you'll pull off the move.

The Waiter method is an open palm, facing up, with the device resting on the hand and pointing at the screen. One of the games that uses that posture is a balancing act in which a character holds a broom by the end of its handle and challenges you to move your hand forward, back, left, and right to keep the broom from falling. You can use small, simple moves to execute the task, or you can get your body into it: bend your knees, pull your hand in and let your own balance extend to the broom. Seconds later, you may be holding the controller at your waist, arms bent to suggest authority in what the game calls the Big Cheese pose, and gyrating to keep a hoop spinning around your character's waist. Exaggerated movements or subtle gestures—whatever fits your personality—will generate the momentum needed to suspend the hoop.

Other poses in the game's E3 demo further the purpose of self-expression. Holding the controller like you would a relay baton, you pump your fist to motivate an onscreen sprinter. The Sketch Artist pose, in which you hold the controller like you would a piece of chalk or a paint brush, allows you to draw a picture. The Mohawk method (holding the controller over your head) helps you complete a microgame in which both you and your character perform deep knee bends. And that's just the beginning. Much of the art and music recall the disco era because a lot of the game's moves are extreme gestures that generate excitement in a room full of people. It's as much fun to watch others play Smooth Moves as it is to play yourself.

Another E3 demo that elicited bold movement was the working title Orchestra. While an assembly of woodwind players, violinists, and brass instrumentalists works through one of classical music's greatest hits, you move the controller as a conductor would a baton to lead the rhythm of the piece. Genuflect with the presence of a virtuoso or pace the players with shorts swipes of your wand—whatever *feels* right *is* right in the realm of Wii control.

A Wii Sports package is in the works, as well. The Tennis game demo turns your controller into a tennis racket. Your character moves to the ball automatically while you swing the controller to trigger a forehand or backhand stroke. If a big swing and a grunt worthy of a Wimbledon finalist helps you get the ball over the net,

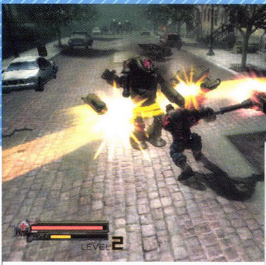

WarioWare: Smooth Moves

Super Mario Galaxy
×12
×14/100
MARIO
×3

If you were shooting through space, you'd be shouting "Whee!" too. Though Super Mario Galaxy delivers a great one-player experience, two can team up for cooperative play.

>SUPER MARIO GALAXY

Super Mario 64 invented the 3-D platformer. Super Mario Galaxy turns it upside down. Levels are made up of heavenly bodies: some spherical, others flat and round like celestial pizzas. Gravitational pull makes Mario stick to each planetary platform as he runs, jumps (with a full repertoire of flighty moves), and stomps foes. By hopping into a star icon and spinning (triggered by a controller shake), the hero blasts off to another destination. Levels have multiple paths that each lead to new challenges.



Project H.A.M.M.E.R.

Slam and swipe—Project H.A.M.M.E.R. gives you robot-smashing power.

that's the way you should play.

Speaking of swinging, Project H.A.M.M.E.R. puts a massive sledgehammer into the hands of man-cyborg M-09. A Super Slam move that makes scrap metal out of the game's robot intruders is triggered by a chopping motion with the remote. You hold the device upright, wait for the hammer to charge, then bring it down. If you get more leverage from holding the controller over your head, then dropping it with the force of a lumberjack, that's the way you should do it. Another move has you pointing the remote toward the ceiling and twirling it to make M-09's hammer spin around, knocking all nearby robots to the ground. Some players execute the move with a gesture that suggests the mixing of a drink. Others bring more of a lassoing motion to the exercise.

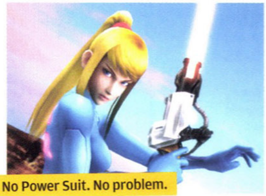
The most important thing about Wii control is that it lets you play the games how you want to play them. It's an extension of your gaming self. You're not limited by arbitrary controls. You're empowered by the possibilities that start with the motion-sensitive device resting in your hand.

>METROID PRIME 3: CORRUPTION

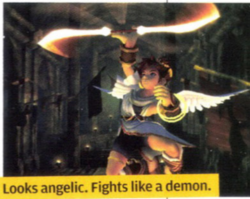
The Galactic Federation is in crisis, its computer network, Aurora Unit, frozen by an alien virus. Though Samus Aran is the federation's first call to set things straight, they've invited other bounty hunters to the party, all of them zeroing in on the source of the trouble: Dark Samus. The Wii FPS gives the heroine new powers brought on by an injection of the volatile substance Phazon. It's a new adventure in which danger lurks in locales near and far.

THE SMASH OF E3

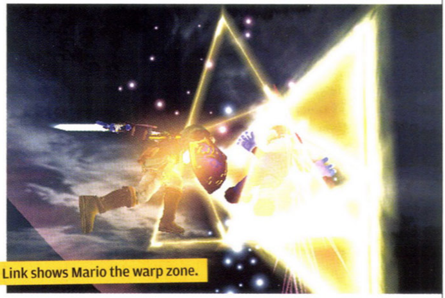
In a surprise appearance at Nintendo's E3 developers' roundtable May 10th, Super Smash Bros. director Masahiro Sakurai unveiled footage from the series' first Wii title to the stunned crowd. The short but supersweet taste of Super Smash Bros. Brawl footage revealed a battery of batterers, some of whom are making their Smash series debut. In the long-time-coming category, Pit from Kid Icarus brings flash and flight to the proceedings, Snake of Metal Gear fame sneaks onto the scene, and Kirby's Meta Knight arrives in a really big ship. Returning fighter Samus Aran, as Zero Suit Samus, also makes an impression. Rounding out the roster of announced characters are Mario, Wario, Link, Pikachu, and Kirby. . . . And is that a Nintendog? For a blow-by-blow game teaser visit the series website: www.smashbros.com.



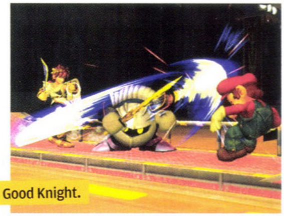
No Power Suit. No problem.



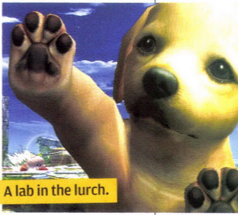
Looks angelic. Fights like a demon.



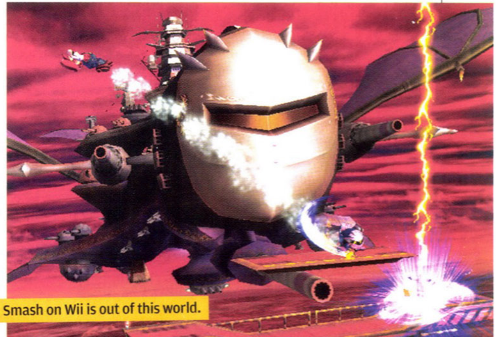
Link shows Mario the warp zone.



Good Knight.



A lab in the lurch.



Smash on Wii is out of this world.

>WARIOWARE: SMOOTH MOVES

The Wii controller becomes the Form Baton in Wario's bizarro universe—a place where the '70s and '80s exemplify the height of fashion, where games take four seconds to play, and where your success is measured by how much fun you're having. With more than 200 microgames and a cast of new WarioWare characters, Smooth Moves is manic, unpredictable and totally Wario.

REAL IT IN

Admit it. Your first thought when you heard that the Wii controller was capable of mimicking real-world movements was that you'd find yourself playing a vegetable-cutting simulation or a butter-churning RPG. Never fear. The controller does let you execute moves that mirror true-to-life actions, but the examples we've seen so far come from a heightened reality.

Yes, there is a fishing sim in the works, but the fact that it's part of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, which lets you fish in a pond in Hyrule, adds a fantasy element. Holding the remote like a fishing rod, you pull back to make Link raise his rod, then fling your wrist forward to send the lure flying over the water. Reel in the line a little using the nunchuk controller's Control Stick to make the line tight, then wait for a bite—maybe pull the line with the remote ever so gently to attract fish to the lure. When the controller rumbles to indicate that you've got a bite, you'll jerk the controller back, reel in the line and collect your prize.

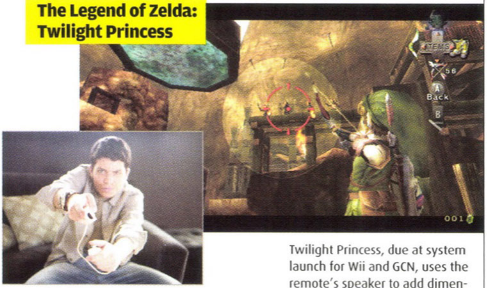
Metroid Prime 3: Corruption offers a similar activity in its grappling function. After locking onto the item that you want to grab (in the demo, a piece of scrap metal that blocks your way), you pull back then thrust forward with the nunchuk to send out a sustained electric charge that sticks to your target. When it hits, you pull the Control Stick back to reel in the item and toss it out of the way.

The Baseball exercise mimics the real-life activity of swinging a bat and hitting the ball a country mile. The Golf demo, similarly, has the remote subbing as a golf club. A big swing executes a drive onto the fairway. A short, elbows-outstretched, body-swaying swing pushes the ball across the green. The Tiger Woods PGA Tour games on previous consoles have simulated the golf stroke through Control Stick moves, but this is a whole new ball game.

Just as Wii changes the way we play golf, the console's upcoming Excite Truck alters that way we think of driving games—the motion-sensitive controller goes beyond even the steering-wheel and gas-pedal controllers. Of course, it has the standard driving controls covered: Holding the controller level with two hands, one hand on each end, you tilt the device left and right to execute turns and power slides. Alternatively, you can bend your elbows, hold the controller close to your chest and turn it clockwise to turn right, and counterclockwise to turn left. Acceleration, brakes and turbo boosts are triggered by button presses. When your vehicle takes off from a ramp, you can turn the truck in the air and change the pitch by rolling the controller forward or backward. In the Excitebike games, landing on two wheels after a jump helped you sustain your speed. In Excite Truck, pitching the vehicle so that it lands on four wheels both keeps your speed and replenishes your turbo power.

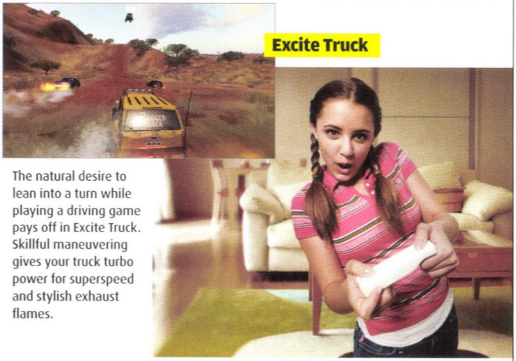
There's no end to the ways that the controller can make game control feel real. And, hey, that butter-churning RPG might be pretty cool.

The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess



Twilight Princess, due at system launch for Wii and GCN, uses the remote's speaker to add dimension to the sound of Link's bow.

Excite Truck



The natural desire to lean into a turn while playing a driving game pays off in Excite Truck. Skillful maneuvering gives your truck turbo power for superspeed and stylish exhaust flames.

>EXCITE TRUCK

Blazing a trail through the racing genre, Excite Truck innovates with tilt-and-turn steering, and ramps and banks that get bigger when the terrain reshapes on the fly. By kicking in the turbo power at the lip of a ramp, you increase your airtime. A rating system scores every turn, jump, and fancy move. When you're in the lead, your scores double, and high scores unlock additional tracks and bonuses.

>Disaster: Day of Crisis

Some run from volcanic eruptions and flash floods. Disaster's Ray runs *to* them. When a special forces unit steals a nuclear device during an unnatural series of natural disasters, the former task-force agent springs into action to prevent the worst-case scenario. The game promises taut action, slick visuals, and realistic physics.

>Project H.A.M.M.E.R.

Half man, half cyborg, robot hunter M-09 has rage against the machines in Project H.A.M.M.E.R., a third-person-perspective sci-fi battler that pulls no punches. When M-09 lays the hammer down, monster parts fly and oil splatters all over the screen. The Wii controller is your weapon. Swing away.

LATE-BREAKING NEWS

Wii GOES WI-FI 24 HOURS A DAY

Speaking at Nintendo's E3 media briefing on May 9th, Nintendo Co. Ltd. president Satoru Iwata announced Wii Connect 24, a feature that will allow the Wii console to operate at low energy (consuming the power of a "mini lightbulb") all day, every day, and download information, such as game levels and weapons, even while users are not playing games. Using the world of Animal Crossing as an example, Iwata suggested that the constant availability of new events and items will make the Wii gaming experience something that is fresh every day. Iwata also mentioned that since the system can operate at all times, you won't have the inconvienence of system load times when you return to your game. Imagine what you might find when you do!

GAMING GREATNESS

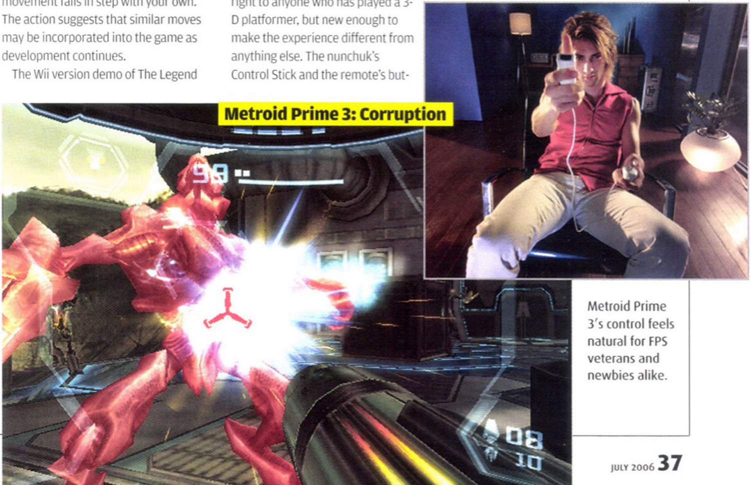
Because of the console's unconventional control features, there's a danger that Wii might be perceived as a novelty by some players and press, and not as a platform that serves the hard-core gamer. That couldn't be farther from the truth. The FPS, which may be the most hard-core of game genres, improves immeasurably with Wii control. Standard console FPS control locks your crosshairs to the middle of the screen, making any aiming adjustment, no matter how slight, move the camera. Some players have sworn off the genre because the constant camera movement can cause a sensation of motion sickness. In Metroid Prime 3: Corruption (and in Red Steel, as you will see after you turn the page), the camera-movement issue is a thing of the past. The Wii remote is a pointing device. To aim at enemies in Corruption, you point to move the crosshairs, which float freely across the screen, then you shoot. As long as you are firing at enemies who are within a certain distance from the center of the screen, the camera will not move. If your aim shifts to the edge of the screen, the camera will pan to follow the crosshairs. Samus Aran's Power Beam is able to lock onto some objects and enemies. When the crosshairs are close to a target that the gun can lock onto, brackets appear around the lock-on point. The press of a button on the nunchuk locks the gun onto the target, and the crosshairs to the center of the screen. The nunchuk also controls forward and backward movement, strafing, and Morph Ball manipulation.

In addition to aiming Samus's weapons, the remote triggers her beam, charged beam shots, missiles, and Morph Ball bombs. In an eye-opening segment of the E3 demo, you can use the remote to control Samus's hand, pulling a handle, turning it, and pushing it back into place. Her hand movement falls in step with your own. The action suggests that similar moves may be incorporated into the game as development continues.

The Wii version demo of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess includes a dungeon level that offers intuitive use of the nunchuk for Link's movement, and the remote for aiming. It's particularly useful when you paint targets by pointing at them, then press a button that triggers a multitarget attack. Link also lets loose a spinning sword attack with a shake of the nunchuk.

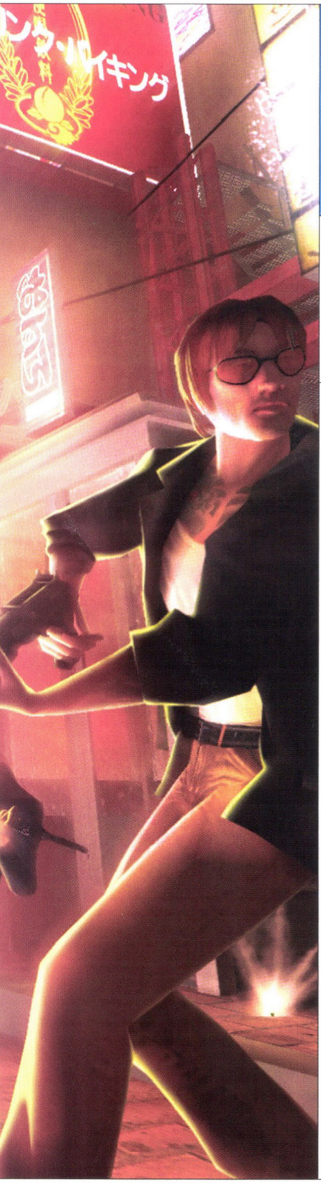
That brings us back to Super Mario Galaxy, in which Mario, too, spins when you shake the nunchuk (or the remote). The game's control scheme will feel just right to anyone who has played a 3-D platformer, but new enough to make the experience different from anything else. The nunchuk's Control Stick and the remote's button trigger Mario's running and jumping, respectively, and the remote's pointer controls a sprite that helps the hero collect items, stun enemies, and gravitate to stars. In two-player cooperative mode, one player commands Mario while the other player guides the floating sprite.

Easy to play, able to take you to gaming worlds that you've never explored, reinventing worlds you have visited before, unquestionably fun—that's Wii. And we couldn't be more excited.



Metroid Prime 3: Corruption

Metroid Prime 3's control feels natural for FPS veterans and newbies alike.



SEEING RED

We saw it. We played it. Red Steel is the real deal, and it's headed exclusively to Wii.

By Andy Myers

Ubisoft's Red Steel has been garnering a lot of hype as of late. This month, NP paid the game's development team a visit in Paris, France, to try out the first-person extravaganza first-hand and bring you the lowdown.

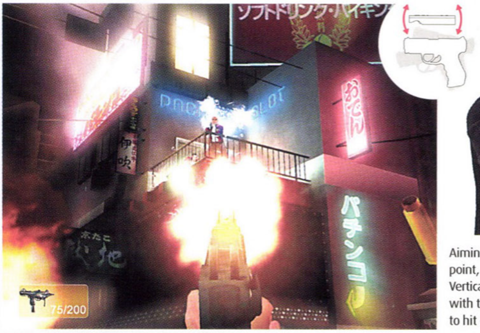
The first-person shooter genre has become considerably more immersive since its inception. Players have explored everything from ultrarealistic depictions of World War II battles to the depths of hell through the FPS lens. And the onslaught of FPS titles looks to be neverending, as new games continue to push next-gen technology to its limits. But only one game—Red Steel—will fundamentally change the way we experience a first-person shooter.

Set mainly in modern-day Japan, Red Steel puts you in the shoes of a westerner who gets flung headfirst into the world of the Japanese mafia (known as the Yakuza) while searching for his kidnapped girlfriend. To survive, you must learn both the modern ways of the gun and the ancient ways of the katana. But Ubisoft's goal with Red Steel is not just to create a great action game; it's also to reinvent first-person interaction by way of Wii's controller. "We are so [focused on] the TV when we are [creating] video games, that we forget that it's all about the guy in front of the TV, and [how he] interacts with what he is seeing and hearing," explains Damien Moret, marketing manager for Ubisoft Paris. "With that, we are coming back to the roots of gaming."

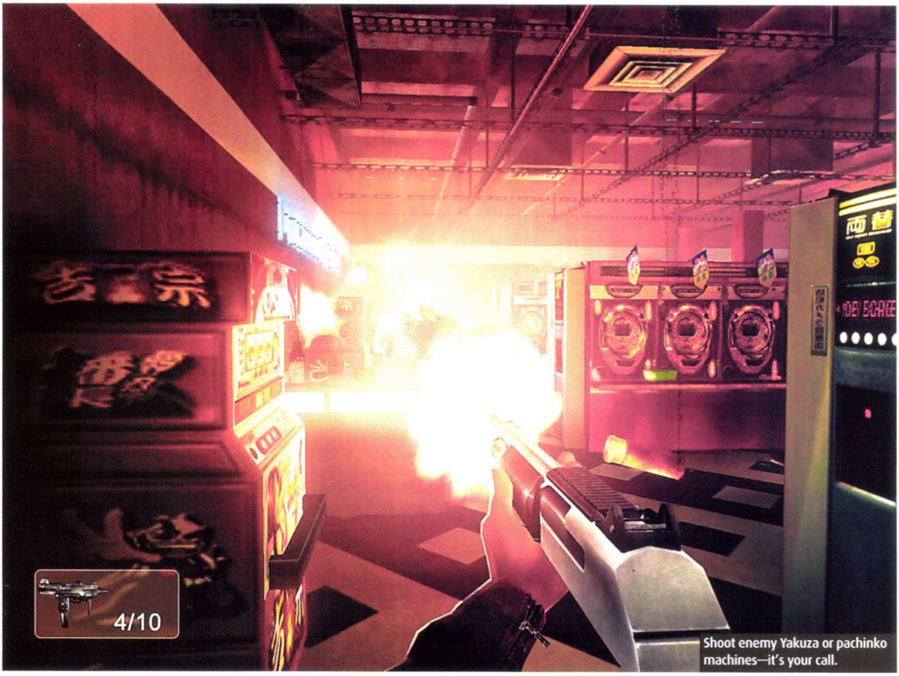
It all started in June of 2005. Ubisoft got a sneak peek at Nintendo's then-secret controller and started working on game concepts. After deciding that the game would be in first-person perspective, Ubisoft began putting together a team for the project. "Having a control that is very fluid, and very easy to pick up for the player—that was the first challenge for the team," said Red Steel producer Marie-Sol Beaudry. To achieve the task, Ubisoft brought in developers from all over the company to assemble an impressively credentialed team (the members have worked on games ranging from Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter to Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time). Within a few months, the all-star team had grown to 85 people, and was laying the groundwork for one of Wii's most-anticipated titles.

> **"We are coming back to the roots of gaming."**
>
> **—Damien Moret, marketing mngr.**

Old-Fashioned Shoot-'Em-Up



Aiming in Red Steel is simple—just point, then press the trigger to shoot. Vertical aiming is especially easy with the Wii controller, allowing you to hit enemies on high with ease.



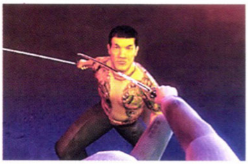
Shoot enemy Yakuza or pachinko machines—it's your call.

>WEAPONRY IN HAND

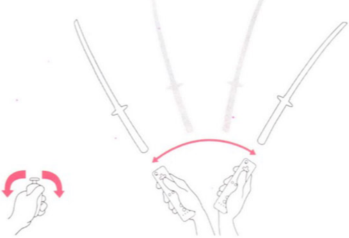
Merely seeing screenshots of Red Steel is deceiving. As Moret noted, "If you have the controller in your hand, you get it—you understand it." Having played Red Steel's gunplay and swordplay for myself, I can vouch for Moret's claims. Running around and shooting in Red Steel is about as intuitive as can be. You move forward and back, and strafe left and right using the nunchuk's analog stick (which is usually held in the left hand). The two buttons on the back of the nunchuk are for jumping and crouching, and the nunchuk's motion sensitivity lets you perform actions such as opening doors or activating switches. The remote is strictly for aiming in the direction you want to move and shooting. Your gun's reticle is always visible onscreen to give you a point of reference for the controller, and the camera cleverly follows just behind the controller movement. Red Steel is quite different from anything you've experienced. You'll almost have to unlearn what you know about dual-analog or PC control before you can embrace the game's fast-paced point-and-shoot action. It's so open, so freeing, that it drastically changes the pacing and dynamics you expect from an FPS. "With [console] FPS games, it's very difficult to move, to shoot, to play in vertical environments," explains Stéphane Bachelet, Red Steel's art director. "With this controller, we made it so anyone can move or shoot very easily." This freedom of movement affects the game in many ways, from the level design to the number of enemies you'll face at once.

The versions of the shooting demo I played consisted of only a few enemies, but Nicolas Eypert (Red Steel's creative director) filled me in on how

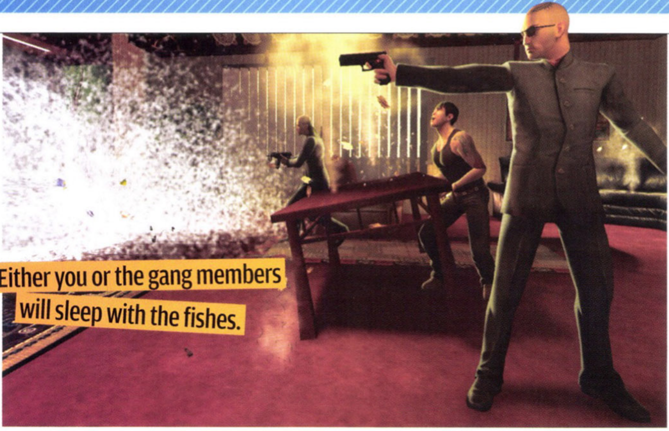
Show Your Mettle



While engaged in a sword battle, the Wii remote becomes your katana. Slash up, down, left, right, or diagonally to attack your enemy. To dodge an attack, twist the nunchuk in either direction to assume a defensive position.



the enemy AI would be organized: "In our AI, people are moving all around you—many times there are people on the right, on the left, and in front of you at the same time. It would be quite annoying in other interfaces, because when you are moving with [a standard] controller, it's like moving with a tank turret." Though you can brandish your sword any time, you'll likely use a gun (whether it's a handgun, an Uzi, or a shotgun) for more of the game. It won't be until you face a sword-wielding samurai that you'll be forced to bring out a blade of your own.



Either you or the gang members will sleep with the fishes.

The swordplay action is by far the most exciting part of Red Steel. Ubisoft Paris has spent months exploring various iterations of sword control. One version I was allowed to play had me moving the controller along a U-shaped path, which translated to the samurai's basic sword positions. But the control scheme that the team settled on for the game's E3 demo is more intuitive, synching your onscreen sword closely to the movement of the controller. When you engage an enemy in a katana battle, the camera will lock on so that your movement is restricted to encircling the target. When your enemy attacks, you can dodge, or twist the nunchuk to parry. Making a slashing motion in any direction with the remote will trigger an attack. The swordplay is very fast-paced, and serves as a great way to break up the monotony of shooting. The mechanics of the swordplay may change—the dev team insists that they are still hard at work fine-tuning the controls—but we were so impressed with the demo's control scheme, we'd be surprised if it changed much.

>SAMURAI SKILLS

Our hands-on time with Red Steel showed us only the basic controls, but the development team explains that the action gets more interesting as you begin honing your skills with gun and sword. There are two basic ways to play Red Steel. Shooting everything that moves (including neutral characters), and slashing the sword haphazardly are examples of how to play brutally. Playing masterfully, on the other hand, will do more than just stroke your ego—it will also earn you bushido points. Much like experience points in an RPG, bushido points can be traded for new skills. But you won't just be given a new skill free and clear—you'll have to train with the samurai masters in Japan before a new skill will become available.

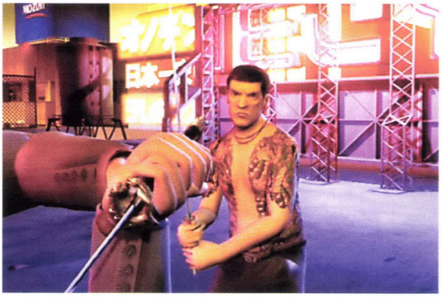
Being masterful with your gun often requires that you defeat an enemy without killing him. This scenario requires the use of the game's freeze-shot mode, which allows you to pause time briefly and focus on specific parts of your opponent's body. For instance, you can perform a freeze shot and shoot the gun out of someone's hand, forcing him to acknowledge defeat before he even gets a shot off. As you play masterfully and earn bushido points, you can spend the points on increasing your freeze-shot meter so the effect will last longer.

Fighting with the sword is much more complex. Using brutal swordplay, it will take roughly 30 to 40 seconds to defeat the average enemy, and you are likely to take damage. "You can just fight normally—blocking, attacking, blocking, attacking," explains Eypert. "But combat like this will end with the guy being killed or you being killed." The alternative is to learn and execute combos, which range greatly in difficulty—even the most basic combo (which I was able to take a stab at during the demo) took more than a few attempts to pull off. Busting out combo attacks will have effects such as breaking an opponent's dodge, or disarming him. Once an opponent is disarmed, you will have a decision to make: execute him or let him live. A masterful player will do the latter and earn bushido points to unlock new combos. The dev team described a late-game combo scenario in which you walk into a room full of five gun-armed enemies, and stealthily kill them all with quick sword combos before any have time to react. Sounds like fun!

> **"If you have the controller in your hand, you get it—you understand it."**
>
> —Damien Moret

It Feels Good to Be a Gangsta

Play Red Steel thug-style by tilting your controller sideways while shooting. This can be done at anytime, though there's no benefit to doing so (besides looking good, of course).



>THE WORLD OF RED STEEL

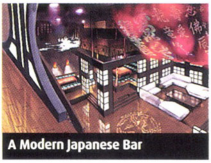
With Red Steel's uncommon controls, it's easy to overlook one of the game's most interesting elements: the story. Red Steel's gritty saga begins in Los Angeles, where you are engaged to a Japanese-American woman named Miyu, and are about to meet her father for the first time. Before you know it, the girl is kidnapped, her father is dead, and you are in possession of his ancient ceremonial katana.

Roughly the first 30 percent of the game takes place in Los Angeles before you head across the water to Japan to seek out Miyu in the Yakuza underworld. The creative team decided that the Yakuza were the perfect subject matter for the game. The Yakuza consider themselves to be the heirs of the samurai, and still use swords in addition to more-modern weapons. As a westerner, you're experiencing Japan for the first time, encountering the Yakuza for the first time, and using a sword for the first time, giving every aspect of the game an air of mystery.

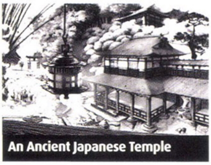
> **"For modern Japan, the best influence was Japan itself."**
>
> —Stéphane Bachelet, art director

To create the appropriate feel for the game, the aesthetic had to be just right. The team did a ton of research on Japanese culture, both ancient and modern, in hopes of reimagining the Land of the Rising Sun to fit their world. "We have [watched] many movies from Japan, like Kurosawa movies—*Ran*, *Kagemusha*, stuff like that," says Bachelet. "Also recent movies, like *The Last Samurai*, *Memoirs of a Geisha*. But for modern Japan, the best influence was Japan itself."

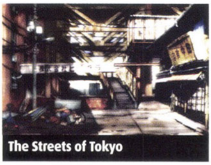
You'll visit many traditional locations, both inside and outside, as you travel Red Steel's Japan. (Below is concept art for three locales.) You'll also encounter fascinating people. Everything in Red Steel, from the characters to the control scheme, is meant to serve the player, and encourage him to explore new things. It's an ambitious game for an ambitious console, and though we'll have to wait many months to see the final version, it's already one of our most-anticipated Wii launch titles.



A Modern Japanese Bar



An Ancient Japanese Temple



The Streets of Tokyo

FRENCH CONNECTION

INSIDE THE STEEL FACTORY

Red Steel's development team leads, from left to right: Marie-Sol Beaudry, Jean-Baptiste Duval, Nicolas Eypert, Roman Campos Oriola, and Stéphane Bachelet.

Producer Marie-Sol Beaudry and creative director Nicolas Eypert shared their thoughts on developing for Nintendo's newest console.

NP: What led to the decision to make Red Steel a first-person shooter?

MB: When you just hold the controller, you want to shoot. That's one of the first things that you would like to do—it feels natural.

NP: Were there any other ideas being thrown around?

MB: At the beginning, many different ideas were brewing. After that, we just tried to focus on the sword fighting. It was the second thing that was really natural, and you really want to do this with the controller.

NP: Was there any influence from Konami's swordfighting arcade game [Blade of Honor], or—this is kind of a stretch—the knife fights in Resident Evil DS?

NE: We are really starting from scratch. Also, the way the controller [works] internally is quite far away from what you can see in the arcades—it's much more complicated. To get the positions, the moves, etc., we were really focusing on designing the system to be sure that it's easy to understand. We are always working on it, but are focusing on something that is really simple to get in to.

NP: Do you think Red Steel sets the standard for future FPSes on Wii?

MB: That's what we want to do. That's our goal. We want to be a reference for other first-person shooters.

NE: Because we got the controller nearly one year ago . . . we think that we have really good sensibility, and speed, and all this tuning on how the camera moves. So gunwise, this should be a stand-out title.

MB: And we are doing the same thing with the sword right now. We've had to reiterate several times, and show it as much [attention] as possible, to have something really cool with the controls, and to set the standard, for sure.

NP: The goal is for Red Steel to launch alongside the console, right?

MB: Yes.

NP: Do you see this as the start of a franchise?

MB: We'd like to. That's a goal, too. We are trying to see how we can be different, and how it can be a new brand so we can build other games after that. We are thinking about that at the same time that we are doing [Red Steel]—thinking about the future.

EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMAN

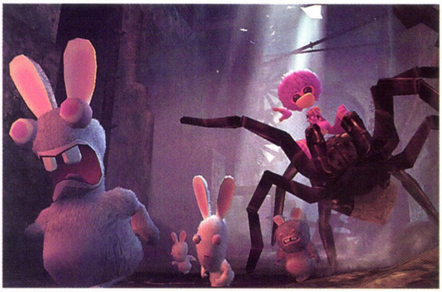
Ubisoft's beloved hero makes the jump to Wii with Rayman: Raving Rabbids.

By Steve Thomason

The jury's still out, but it's quite possible that Rayman creator Michel Ancel has gone completely insane. With the latest game in the series, he's not only dressed the limbless hero in a variety of bizarre disguises—from an afro-puffed disco inferno to a bespectacled grandma—he's chosen as the game's antagonists demonic bunny rabbits hell-bent on destroying the world. Perhaps the acclaimed game designer wants to challenge our notion of what's safe; to illustrate how even the most lovable thing can be corrupted. Or maybe he was attacked by a jackalope as a kid. Whatever the case, this is the mind responsible for Beyond Good & Evil and Rayman 2, so if it is plunging into the depths of madness, we're more than happy to go along for the ride.

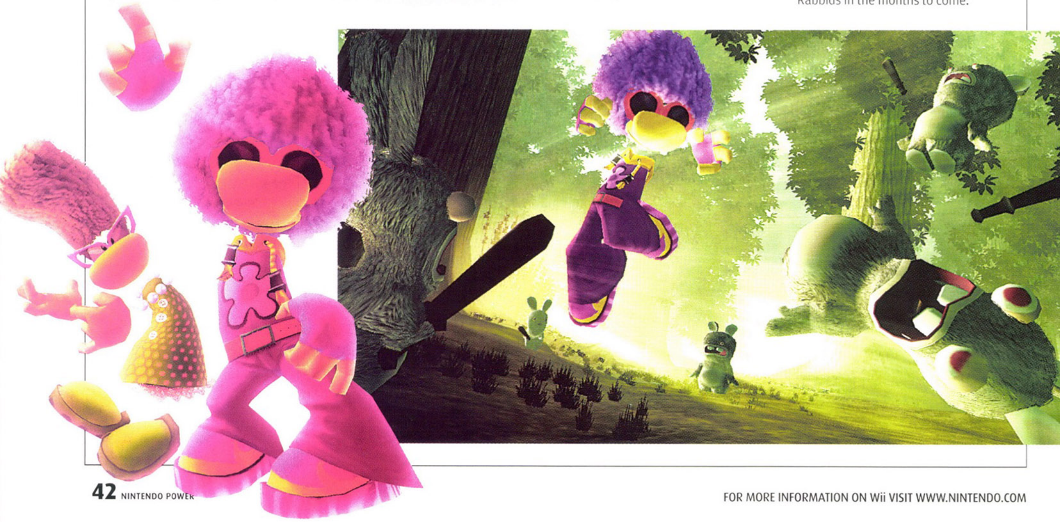
Though Raving Rabbids will appear on multiple platforms, the Wii version will take full advantage of the system's unique controller. "We have devised many innovative ways for Rayman to use [the controller's] functions within the gameplay experience," explained Ancel between shock-therapy sessions. "You'll be able to do a sort of acrobatic 'sky diving,' as well as throwing actions and a bit of kung fu, to name but a few [examples]." We're optimistic that, in addition, Rayman will drop the "hip" 'tude that all but ruined his last game, Hoodlum Havoc, (which Ancel was not directly involved with). We'll keep a close eye on the development, and bring you much more on Raving Rabbids in the months to come.

Animal Kingdom



Rayman can ride numerous creatures, including sharks, rhinos, and giant tarantulas, to help him vanquish the despicably adorable demon bunnies.

When you're done putting on your eyeliner, you'll use the controller to steer your various mounts.



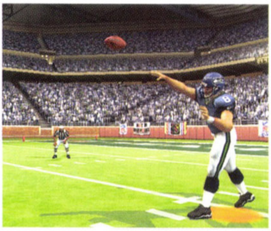
PIGSKIN PREVIEW

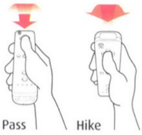
Ready for some football? EA Sports kicks off with Madden NFL 07, the closest you can get to the real thing without pads, a helmet, and a medical release form.

By George Sinfield

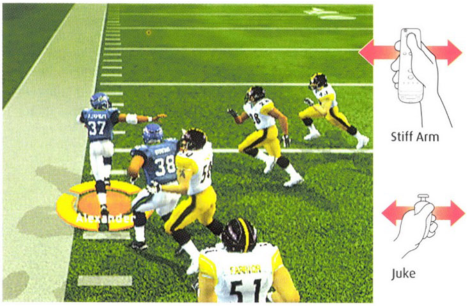
It's hard to believe, but there are gamers who have not caught on to sports titles; one reason is that pushing buttons seems far removed from the real-world sports activity. EA aims to fix that disconnect with the Wii version of Madden NFL 07 (working title) by letting players make the same motions that the pros make to snap the ball, pass, stiff-arm defenders, and tackle the ball carrier. Said producer Jason Armenise in a recent interview, "We want to bring more of the game of football into Madden, and the Wii controller is the key for us doing that." The control scheme assigns an athlete's arm movement to the remote, and his body motion to the nunchuk attachment. A pass is a flick of the wrist with the controller in hand, a pump fake is the same motion with a button pressed, a stiff-arm is a swipe to the left or right, and a juke is a shake of the nunchuk. The developers are confident that players will take to the controls instantly, but they're planning an in-game tutorial to make sure that armchair QBs know the full extent of the controls. A new common-sense play-calling scheme is also in the works, as is a feature that allows you to retry plays during single-player games.

Air It Out

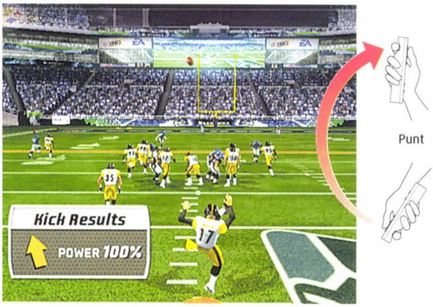




Pass it deep or short. The amount of force that you put behind your throw determines the ball's speed and the pass's distance.



MVP Shaun Alexander knows how to keep defenders at arm's length. You can do the same by making a slicing motion.



Punting mirrors the action that your foot makes while you execute a kick. A powerful kick gives it distance and loft.

HONOR ROLE

When you're parachuting into Nazi territory, nothing cramps your WWII fighting style more than nonintuitive controls and a jerky camera. The developers behind the Wii version of Medal of Honor: Airborne believe that Nintendo's next console fixes any issues that players have had in the past about first-person shooters and that it is better suited to the genre than any of its predecessors or peers. The game's control schemes use the remote for weapon aiming and grenade tossing, and the nunchuk attachment for running and strafing. Rather than moving every time you adjust your aim, the camera stays steady, allowing you to pick off enemies with ease. MoHA is on target for a fall release. —George S.

MOHA starts by dropping members of the 82nd and 101st Airborne divsions into Operation Husky in Sicily.

The control is real. The big bails are not.

RACE TRICK

Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam is taking Activision's trick-and-tumble series for a ride.

By George Sinfield

Fluent in body language, the Wii controller picks up your every tilt, turn, and subtle shake, and transfers the moves to a soaring Tony Hawk in Downhill Jam. The racing action was fluid, fast, and dangerously real during an NP-exclusive demo of the gravity-powered work in progress at the studio of developer Toys for Bob, near San Francisco.

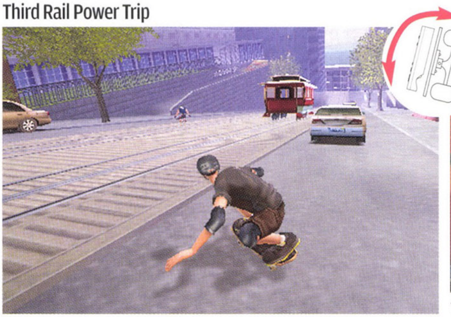
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater fans may remember Downhill Jam as a section in the series' first game. Though that course offered an initial incline, it leveled out into a skate-park setting for a THPS bread-and-butter run on half-pipes and rails. When Activision commissioned Toys for Bob to be the first group outside of pioneering company Neversoft to create a Tony Hawk console title, the developer proposed a return to the hill for what Toys for Bob producer Alex Ness calls "a different take on the Tony Hawk game." Said Ness, "We explored a bunch of concepts, but this one—a racing game—made the most sense. It just fit."

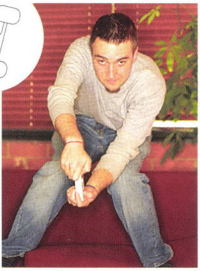
Though the game's objectives are different from those of previous Tony Hawk titles, Activision producer Kragen Lum insists that players who cut their gaming teeth on the Pro Skater, Underground, and American Wasteland games will adapt to Downhill Jam naturally: "The core controls and gameplay mechanics are still there. What we're doing is funneling them into a different type of game; taking it from a trick-based game to more of a racing-based game with tricks."

Lead designer Toby Schadt added, "We're trying to retain the depth and complexity of the Tony Hawk games while making the game very accessible in terms of pick up and play."

"It'll feel right," added Lum, "and obviously, with the [Wii] controller, it'll be a different experience—a more immersive experience." That experience is one of motion-controlled character movement, and tense racing challenges: from full-contact competitions to finesse-friendly trick events. It's a different take on the Tony Hawk game, all right, and one that boarding fans with a need for speed won't be able to resist.

Third Rail Power Trip


A power slide gets Tony across the tracks on time. On a board you've got to lean into your turn. It's the same for Wii control in Downhill Jam.


Tilting the remote sharply for power slides is recommended. Standing on the furniture is not.

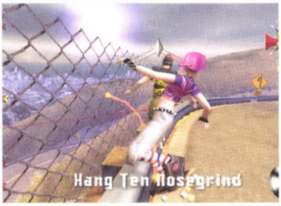
>TWIST AND ROUT

"The most fundamental change to the Tony Hawk system is that we're using the controller's motion sensor to mimic the way that a skateboard would turn in real life," explained Schadt. Tech demos for Wii control have focused on a scheme that has you hold the remote in one hand and point it at the screen. While that may be the method that most Wii games will use, the Toys for Bob team settled on a configuration that has you hold the remote in two hands—one end in each hand—and tilt it left and right to turn your boarder or maintain balance while grinding. "When you see people play racing games, they get their bodies into every turn," noted Schadt. "We think that's something that we can capitalize on; that intuitive sense of turning."

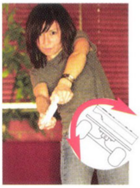
Downhill Jam's two-handed control makes the Control Pad and buttons accessible for ollies and grabs. A special type of turn—a power slide—incorporates a button press with a controller tilt. The developers are working on a way to work in manuals, too. In previous Tony Hawk games, you executed the front- or back-wheel balancing act by pressing up then down, or down then up on the Control Pad. The team is working on a motion-based solution. Said Lum, "We don't want to make someone switch from moving the controller [to steer the boarder] to using the Control Pad [to pull off a manual]."

The execution of tricks and trick combos (of which grinds and manuals are a big part) builds a skull-themed boost meter that the developers are calling the Zone Bone. You can store boost power, then use it at crucial moments in the race by shaking the remote or thrusting it forward. Another way to build boost power is to destroy objects and knock opposing racers to the ground. Tricks, shortcuts, and physical contact give players lots of options. Lum professed, "No matter what someone likes to do, they can enjoy playing the game and be competitive."

Not the Same Old Grind

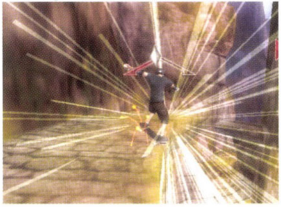


One of eight characters new to the Tony Hawk series performs a guard-rail grind. Motion control keeps her from hitting the pavement.

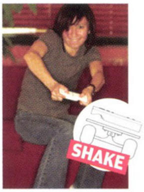


Everybody twists the controller while playing racing games. Now it makes sense.

Blurring the Lines



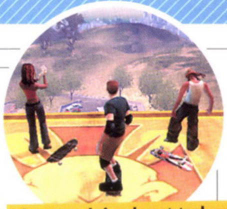
Tricking builds boost power. Boosts blast you forward with blurring speed as seen here on a ledge in Machu Picchu.



Want to go fast? Give the remote a thrust to take off.

ALL HANDS ON THE DECK

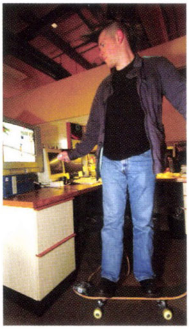
CREATING CONTROL



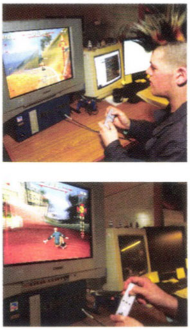
The Hawk is about to leave the perch for a Jam Session.

If you want to start a conversation with a group of game developers, ask them how they would translate any real-world activity to Wii control. The possibilities are endless and exciting to think about for the industry's creative minds. In developing the control scheme for Downhill Jam, the Toys for Bob team wanted to make sure that it was easy for anyone to pick up the game and start skating, and that players familiar with other Tony Hawk games would be able to pull off tricks without a hitch. "We took a [GCN] controller and made the game feel right with that first," explained Lum. "Then we took that concept and applied it to the [Wii] controller. We kept the trick controls feeling right and just dialed in different methods [for the other actions]." Using the remote as a single-hand pointer was an early consideration, but the developers found that the two-handed tilt method gave players more access to the trick controls.

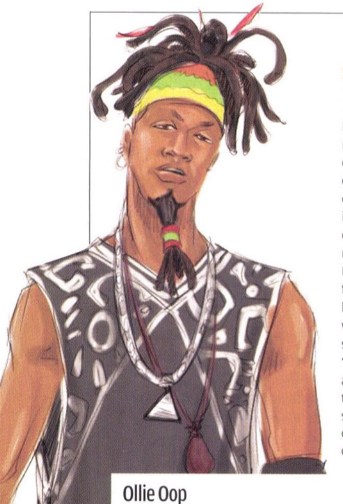
When the tilt controls were in their early stages, the team attached a dev-kit controller to an actual skateboard, mapped the tricks to the nunchuk attachment, and played the game by standing and leaning on the board. "It's an example of the crazy ideas that we've been trying," said Schadt of the experiment. "We're still in discussions as to whether or not we might be able to offer some sort of accessory that makes [attaching the controller to a skateboard] easy to do."



Just how real could control get? Designer Dan Gerstein demonstrates an early experiment.



Development isn't all coding and bad coffee. The big reward is actually playing the game.



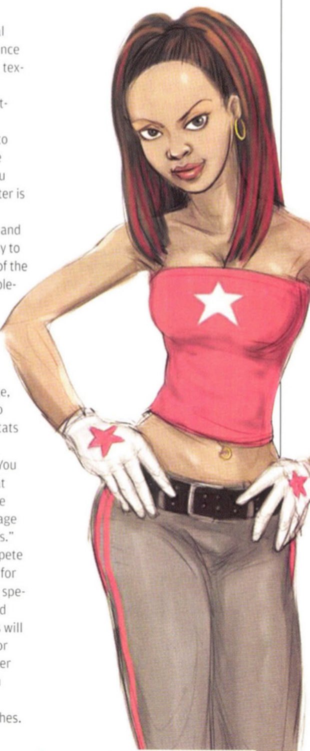
>GOING DOWNHILL, FAST

Downhill Jam takes place in eight real-world locations and offers 96 events. Though some events use the entire length of an area, most focus on shorter track sections. (The game introduces locations with abbreviated events, then eventually lets you run through an entire location.) During development, the designers found that the areas would have to be larger than they had thought. "We wanted to give players a strong sense of speed," explained Schadt. "So the levels kept getting longer and longer." The developers estimate that players will fly through a new set of textures every 15 to 20 seconds. Rather than copy and paste objects to extend the size of the levels, the group hired 10 additional artists to create new sections. Since the game programming streams textures, the locations vary widely, offering both rural and urban settings in a single course.

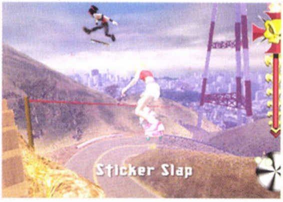
Though Activision is not ready to reveal all of the locations, they've announced the inclusion of Machu Picchu and San Francisco; the latter is a particularly natural selection because of the city's famous hills and the Toys for Bob studio's proximity to the San Francisco Bay area. One of the highlights of the SF level is a cobblestone avenue inspired by the world's most winding street, Lombard. It should be an acid test for your proficiency with the tilt-to-turn control.

The locations are not only large, but also complex. "We've tried to build the levels so that as your stats increase, new lines will become accessible," remarked Schadt. "You might have a high-wire grind that you can't reach until you increase your ollie stats. That will encourage people to go back to replay levels."

The eight characters who compete against Tony Hawk are new Toys for Bob creations, each with skating specialties, unique personalities, and rivalries with each other. Players will be able to select from the field for both single-player and multiplayer races. We'll have more details on characters and locations as the game's fall release date approaches.



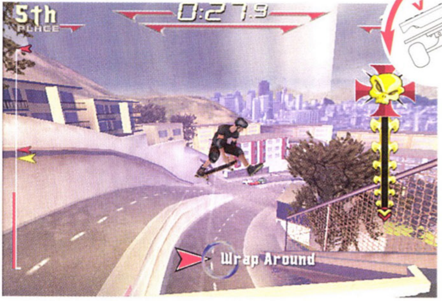
Ollie Oop



Getting big air is as important as ever in Downhill Jam. The game uses the traditional button press and release to execute an ollie.

It's all about balance, timing, and looking good in faded jeans.

Dude, That's a Twisted Trick



Grab, turn, tilt—the longer your combos, the faster you'll build boost power for a really big finish.

It's easy to get caught up in the moment when you're tilting and tapping at the same time.

THE HAWK TALKS

Second to John Madden, Tony Hawk is the biggest name in video game endorsements. The popularity of Activision's Tony Hawk titles has helped draw an audience to Hawk's skateboarding videos and to the Boom Boom Huckjam tours. We caught up with Hawk on the road to ask him about downhill skateboarding and life as a video game star.

NP: How does downhill skateboarding differ in real life from vert boarding? Does it require different skills? A different mind-set?
TH: It's all about speed, confidence, and stability. Getting to the finish line is more important than doing the hardest routines in a fixed time frame. I believe that the thrill of racing attracts different personalities than those who want to learn new tricks. Each requires incredible skill, but you don't see many skaters that cross over from one to the other.

NP: What's the biggest hill you've ever skated?
TH: The one in *Gleaming the Cube* in the final chase scene. My character was supposed to be driving the Pizza Hut truck, but if you look closely I am actually one of the skaters bombing the hill since they didn't have enough skaters who were willing to skate behind the truck.

NP: What is more exhilarating: a big hill or a big vert trick?
TH: I have never found anything to replace the thrill of landing a new vert trick, but I like the confidence that downhill skating forces you to have. Once you are committed to a hill, you have to believe that you can pull it off, or you go down *hard*.

NP: Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam has the player steering the skateboard by tilting the controller. In what types of ways do you execute turns in real downhill skateboarding?
TH: When you're going fast, turning is heavily amplified. You need to keep your trucks tight and make subtle movements or you get "speed wobbles." Once they start, there is only one way out and it ends in pain.

NP: The game's developers have talked about the board rattling when it gets to a certain speed. About how fast do you have to be going in real life for your board to rattle? What do you do to control it?
TH: Many factors go into speed wobbles: length of board, tightness of trucks, weight of rider, and lack of confidence. Standing closer to the front helps quite a bit.

> **"Once you are committed to a hill, you have to believe that you can pull it off, or you go down *hard*."**

NP: What kind of input do you normally give to Activision on your video games? What advice have you offered for Downhill Jam?
TH: I put as much input as I feel necessary to keep the game legitimate and fun for skaters to play. For Downhill Jam I provided advice on locations, riders, course elements, and unique tricks specific to downhill skating.

NP: You've had the Boom Boom Huckjam, and now the Downhill Jam. How does the "jam" embody the spirit of skateboarding?
TH: I like to think of the "jam" format as a group of talented riders getting together and inspiring each other. In this case, the other racers will get you fired up to figure out better lines and ways to beat them.

> **"I think of the 'jam' format as a group of talented riders getting together and inspiring each other."**

NP: The Pro Skater, Underground and American Wasteland games have gone in a few different directions with their focuses on tricks, attitude, and skateboarding culture. What's been your favorite game of the series so far? Why?
TH: I always like our most current game because it includes all of the best elements of our series, and the newer consoles allow us to expand on favorite features. Downhill Jam is a new direction in that the focus is on racing. I can't compare it with our other games, but I'm excited to offer a speed-driven option.

NP: Where would you like the Tony Hawk games to go from here?
TH: Wherever the new console technologies take us. With Wii and PS3 on the horizon, the future of our series is looking bright.

Those guys in the back will need a turbo boost to fly past the Hawk.

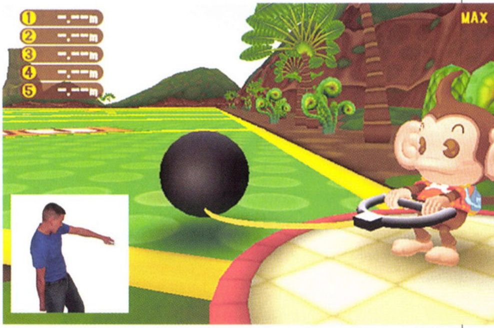
SEGA GOES BANANAS

Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz promises to be more fun than a barrel of . . . well, you get the idea.

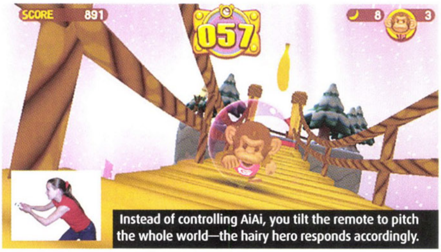
By Chris Shepperd

Super Monkey Ball is rolling onto Wii! AiAi and his pals will be among the first to come to the system when it launches later this year. With Super Monkey Ball Adventure for GCN expanding on the SMB storyline, Banana Blitz plans to return to the more puzzle-ish feel of the first Super Monkey Ball. Banana Blitz will be packed with new features—the simians will face boss battles, and they'll be able to jump (simply flick the Wii remote upward), both of which are firsts for the series. Beyond a brand-new single-player experience complete with all-new levels, you can look forward to way more of the multiplayer party games that were a highlight of the previous Monkey Ball—and it's all designed to take full advantage of the Wii controller.

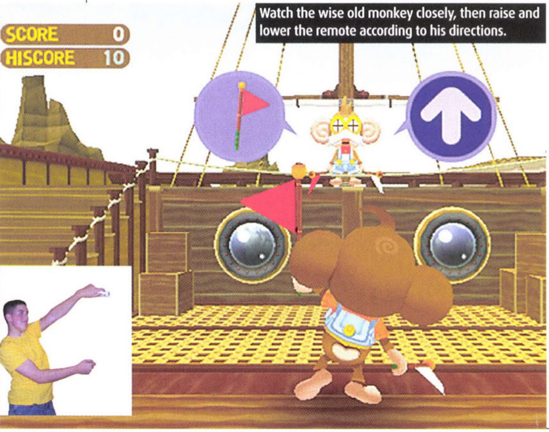
Based on how much we know about the Wii controller and how much we know about Super Monkey Ball, it seems like a no-brainer that the two will work well together. Mr. Nagoshi, producer of all of the Super Monkey Ball titles, including Banana Blitz, agrees. "The reason [the controller] fits so well is because SMB originally had the style of tilting the game world as its control scheme. By tilting the controller itself, I think that users will feel the operation even more naturally this time. I think the game and Wii have been matched up very nicely." But if it works so easily, won't it make the game easier, as well? Mr. Nagoshi says no: "The controller has changed, but the feeling of difficulty of the gameplay itself is still retained. This goes for the main game, but regarding the party games, we wanted users to widely experience Wii's unique controller operations, and so we did not make the party games too difficult." This sounds like a great middle ground—you'll be able to enjoy the challenge of the game, while friends who visit will be able to play the first time they pick it up.



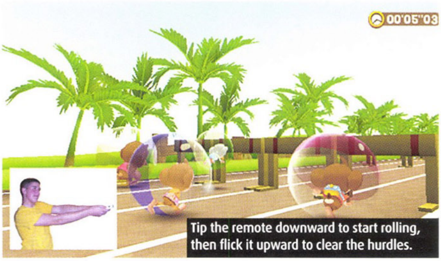
To start the monkey a-swingin', wind the remote in a circular motion. Release the A Button to release your grip and send the ball flying.



Instead of controlling AiAi, you tilt the remote to pitch the whole world—the hairy hero responds accordingly.

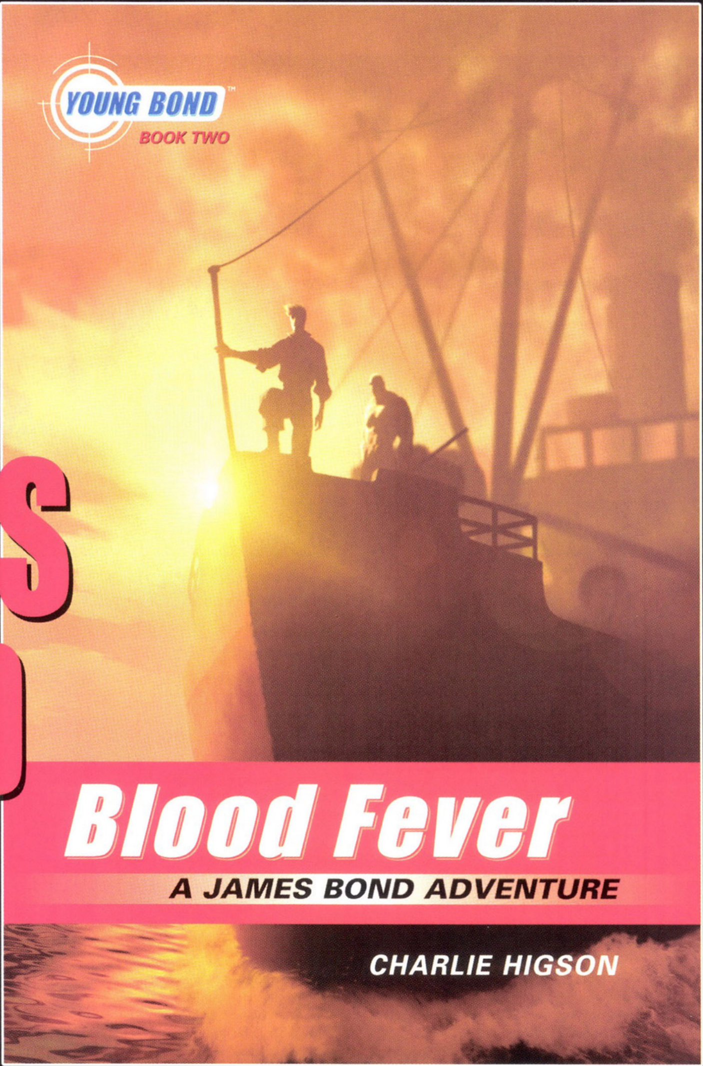


Watch the wise old monkey closely, then raise and lower the remote according to his directions.



Tip the remote downward to start rolling, then flick it upward to clear the hurdles.

BEFORE
HE WAS
007,
JAMES
BOND
WAS A
BOY OF
13 . . .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SIGNAL STRENGTH

From falling blocks to headshots—Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection is the only way to play.

By Pete Michaud

Ever since its launch in November, the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection hasn't stopped making noise in the online world. Following the release of two exciting titles, NP checks in on Nintendo's ever-expanding gaming service to see what all the ruckus is about.

Let Freedom Ping

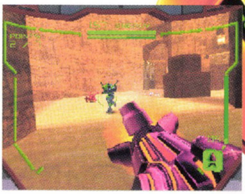
Attention, everyone living under a rock: Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection (WFC) is absolutely free. Now that we have that out of the way, let me put this idea out there—if you own a DS and any of the six Wi-Fi-enabled DS games, there is zero reason you shouldn't be laying the smack down on dozens of players just like you, everyday. Let's face it; games get old. It's the nature of the beast—you purchase a game, play the snot out of it, break all the records, collect all the Shines, and you're done. You've owned Mario Kart DS since mid November and now it's collecting dust. Enter the WFC—it can turn your old favorite game into your new favorite game. How? By providing some good ol'-fashioned human interaction.

The first time you get bested in Mario Kart by someone who used an underhanded move to pummel you over the information superhighway, you'll understand exactly what I mean. So if you've seen all there is to see in Animal Crossing, and gotten your billionth point combo in Tony Hawk's American Sk8Land. Why not take it online? You never know what you might find.

The Hunt Is On . . . Line

Tens of thousands of gamers are now well on their way to becoming the greatest space bounty hunter of all time. Samus Aran? Nope—I'm talking about the best of the best on the WFC. Once you choose your favorite hunter and engage three other human players in Metroid Prime Hunters' Battle mode over the Net, you'll see; it's one incredible handheld experience. Especially once you get that taste of victory—oh, that sweet, sweet taste. But that's just the start of it; after you add your buddies to your friend list (and vice versa) you can meet up online and challenge each other at one of the many Wi-Fi multiplayer modes. The favorite mode of the NP staff is Bounty—it never seems to get old.

Friendly play isn't your cup of tea? Set out to find a rival instead. If you play someone who you'd like to play again, you can agree to be his rival. If you agree to be each other's rival at the end of a match, you'll be added to each other's rival list, which is like the friend list, except that you can't talk or text-message rivals. Speaking of talking, now you can tell all your friends how lousy they played to their faces . . . er, ears. Metroid

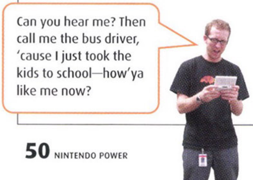


Fact #1

As of 1:31 a.m. PST March 7, 2006, **1 million unique users** had logged into the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

Fact #2

The US is leading the charge with **15 million Wi-Fi connections** thus far. Japan is a close second.


Can you hear me? Then call me the bus driver, 'cause I just took the kids to school—how'ya like me now?

New SUPER MARIO BROS.®

An exclusive miniguide for the readers of Nintendo Power.

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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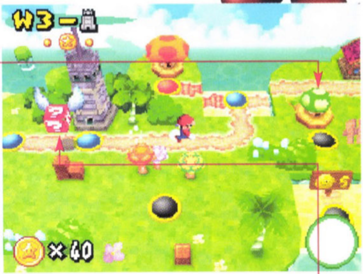
Questions

New Super Mario Bros. is packed with mysteries. Confused about Star Coins? Puzzled by alternate paths? Can't quite pull off that 1-Up loop? Find the answers to your questions here!

By Casey Loe

What's Going On in the World Maps?

Each of the game's eight worlds is packed with stages to challenge: standard numbered levels, alternate lettered levels, secret-packed ghost houses, and Bowser Jr.'s boss-guarded towers and castles. You'll also find Toad houses, warp pipes, and warp cannons, but reaching those won't be easy; you'll often need to spend Star Coins to clear Star Coin signs or find alternate exits hidden in certain levels.



Toad Houses

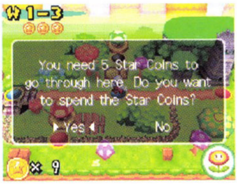
Green Toad houses provide 1-Ups, while orange and red Toad houses offer rare power-ups. You can visit each Toad house only once, so save 'em till you need 'em!

Red Flying ? Blocks and Hammer Bros.

Red Flying ? Blocks and Hammer Bros. roam from level to level on certain world maps. When you enter their current level, punch the block or stomp the bro to earn an item.

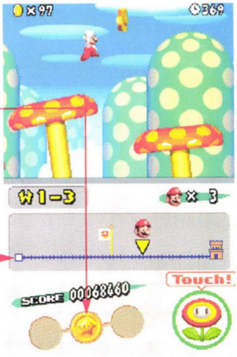
What Can I Buy with the Star Coins I Collect?

You can collect hidden Star Coins in game levels and spend them to clear Star Coin signs on the world map, opening paths to alternate levels and Toad houses. Clearing a sign will give you a rare opportunity to save your game, so leave a few standing till you need to save.



You need 5 Star Coins to go through here. Do you want to spend the Star Coins?

▸Yes◂ No



Star Coin Diagram

Each level has three Star Coins, and displays a diagram that indicates which ones you've found. If you die before beating the level or reaching the checkpoint, the coins will be lost and you'll need to grab them again.

The Progress Bar

The progress bar shows your position in the level. In conjunction with the Star Coin diagram, the progress bar can help you narrow down the locations of missing coins.

Toad Says . . .

On the pages that follow, we'll show the progress bars along with each screenshot. Use them to locate the areas discussed in the tips.

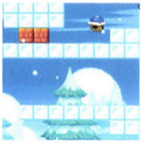
How Do I Use the New Power-Ups?

In addition to hosting the usual Super Mushroom and Fire Flower, New Super Mario Bros. introduces three new power-ups. The game is full of secrets that you can discover only with a blue Koopa shell or Mini Mushroom, and the rare Mega Mushroom provides a brute-force solution to any tough foe or tricky obstacle.

BLUE KOOPA SHELL

The blue Koopa shell allows Mario to act like a kicked Koopa shell. Get a running start to tuck into the shell automatically. Mario's spinning shell can take out enemies, bash blocks from the side, and bounce off of horizontal barriers.

World 5-B



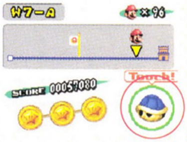
Only Shell Mario can smash through the blocks to reach the alternate warp-pipe exit in World 5-B. There are no blue Koopa shells nearby, so you'll need to bring one with you.

Toad Says . . .

Shell Mario can dodge most enemy attacks by hiding in his shell (press down on the Controll Pad). Shell Mario will also enjoy improved swimming ability in underwater stages.

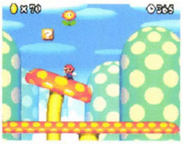
RESERVE-SLOT ITEMS

The reserve slot on the lower screen allows Mario to carry an extra item for later use. You can place an item in your reserve slot by picking up an item you already have, or by finding one in a Toad house. The hierarchy of items is shown here—items will be replaced only by items above it on the list.



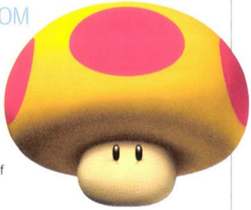
Mega Mushroom
▼
Koopa Shell
▼
Mini Mushroom
▼
Fire Flower
▼
Super Mushroom

Exploiting the Reserve Slot



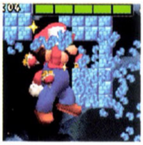
When you die and continue with a Fire Flower in your reserve slot, use your reserved Fire Flower before you hit a ? Block. That way you'll get another Fire Flower instead of a Super Mushroom.

MEGA MUSHROOM



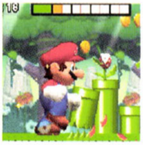
The Mega Mushroom temporarily transforms Mario into a behemoth who can destroy anything in his path. Not only can he create shortcuts and kill tough foes, he can earn 1-Ups based on the amount of carnage he causes!

World 5-2



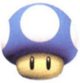
If you're trying to earn 1-Ups, use your Mega Mushroom in block-filled Worlds like 5-2. You'll earn the maximum five 1-Ups with ease!

World 6-3



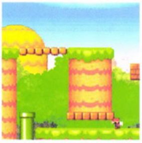
The Mega Mushroom can often serve as a "Get Out of Jail Free" card to let you rip through tough levels. Annoyed by World 6-3's pipe maze? Eat a Mega Mushroom and smash through it.

MINI MUSHROOM



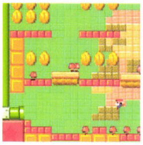
The Mini Mushroom shrinks Mario, making him more vulnerable to enemy attacks, but light enough to glide long distances after a Wall Jump or to run on the surface of water. Many areas are accessible only to Mini Mario.

World 1-4



Mini Mario's size can be an asset, allowing him to squeeze through tiny passages and into small pipes. Whenever you see a minipipe, you know a Mini Mario area is required.

World 8-2



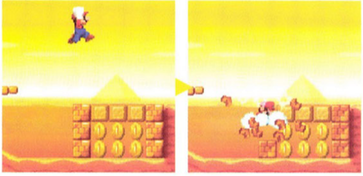
To reach the minipipe in World 8-2, you'll need to dash along the surface of the water. The pipe will take you to a Mini Mario area filled with Mini Goombas!

What Are Mario's New Moves?

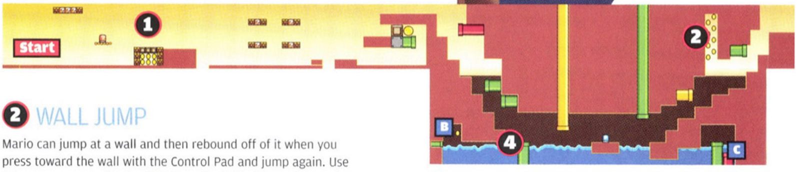
Mario has learned a lot over the years, and has a wide repertoire of acrobatic tricks at his disposal. Several new moves are making their side-scrolling debut in New Super Mario Bros. For examples of where to use them, refer to the callouts on the sample map below.

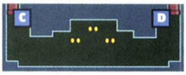
❶ GROUND POUND

As long as Mario is Super Mario-sized, he can bash blocks from above as well as below. To clear the blocks at point 1, jump above them and hold the Control Pad down to Ground-Pound through the entire column. This move can also damage foes or knock items out of ? Blocks.



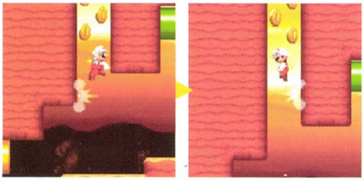
World 2-4 Map Sample

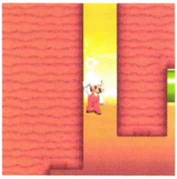




❷ WALL JUMP

Mario can jump at a wall and then rebound off of it when you press toward the wall with the Control Pad and jump again. Use this move repeatedly at point 2 to collect all of the coins, or elsewhere in the level to save yourself from falling.

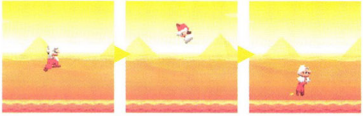




While falling alongside a wall, you can press the Control Pad toward the wall to slow your descent and allow Mario to Wall-Jump with a tap of the jump button.

❸ TRIPLE JUMP

The stretch of desert at point 3 has enough room to try out the new triple jump. Get a running start and do three consecutive jumps—on the third, Mario will do an extralong somersault leap. (It won't take you quite high enough to reach the opposite ledge—you'll need to use this stage's ? Switch instead.)



Toad Says . . .

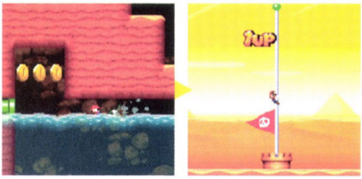
We saw the triple jump in Super Mario 64, but this is the first time it's appeared in a side-scrolling Mario game.

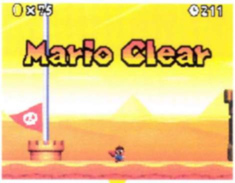
Why Do Some Levels Have Multiple Exits?

Many levels have two exits: one with a red flag, and one with a black flag. Red-flag exits are often among the game's best-hidden secrets, and the rewards for finding them can be great. The exits create paths on the world map that lead to warps or Toad houses, or bypass long stretches of the world.

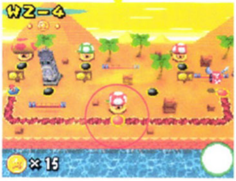
④ MINI MARIO FINDS ANOTHER EXIT

If you enter this level as Mini Mario (or bring a Mini Mushroom) you can dash along the water's surface from the pipe at point 4 and into a minipipe that leads to an alternate exit.





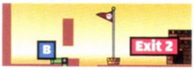
Jump from the ledge to the top of the flagpole to clear the stage as you would at a black-flag exit.

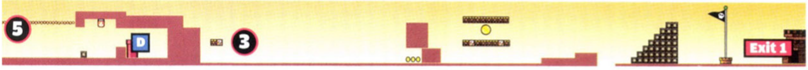


When you return to the world map, instead of creating a direct path to the tower, the red-flag exit will make a winding road that leads to a Toad house and bypasses two levels!

Toad Says . . .

If you see a world-map area that you can't reach, chances are there is an alternate exit in a nearby level.



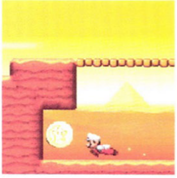


Why Revisit Levels?

Once you've beaten a level, you can reenter it at any time to explore it further. You may want to search for alternate exits, hidden areas, or items you missed previously. When revisiting a level, you can pause the game and select Return to Map at any time, but you'll lose any new items you've found.

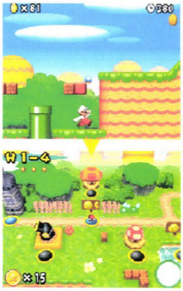
⑤ COLLECT MISSED STAR COINS

You can't always collect all of a level's Star Coins in a single trip. For example, if you played this stage as Mini Mario and took the alternate exit, you'll need to play through it again to get the second Star Coin at point 5 and the third one near the exit.



GET THE POWER-UP YOU WANT

Many levels have secrets that only Mini Mario can reach, but some of those levels don't contain Mini Mushrooms. Replaying stages where Mini Mushrooms appear, such as World 1-4, allows you to get them any time you want.

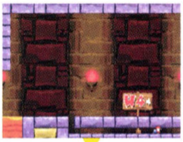


To exit the stage with this precious Mini Mushroom in hand, you'll need to beat the level again. If you use Return to Map you'll lose the item.

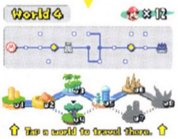
If you challenge World 1-4 again as Mini Mario, you can get a second Mini Mushroom for your reserve slot. Now you'll have a spare when you need it!

How Do I Reach Worlds 4 & 7?

The world-map schematic on the lower screen shows worlds 4 and 7 on a lower tier, connected to higher-tier worlds by dotted lines. To reach these worlds instead of the worlds above them, you'll need to beat the castles of Worlds 2 and 5, respectively, as Mini Mario. It won't be easy, but both castles do contain Mini Mushrooms.



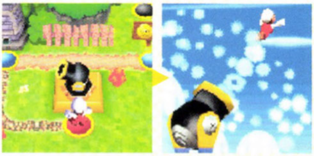
Mini Mario can't stomp, so he'll need to use Ground Pounds to damage the castle bosses. If you win, you'll fall into a narrow path that leads to the lower-tier world.



You can challenge the newly unlocked world now, or return to it later by tapping its icon on the lower screen. Note that the lower-tier worlds are much tougher than their upper-tier relatives!

WARPING WITH CANNONS

If you can find the alternate exits that lead to them, warp cannons will allow you to skip entire worlds and beat the game in record time! After beating the game, you can go back and play all the levels you skipped. (And you'll be able to save at any time!)



World 1 ◂▸ World 5
World 2 ◂▸ World 5
World 3 ◂▸ World 6
World 4 ◂▸ World 7
World 5 ◂▸ World 8

Toad Says . . .

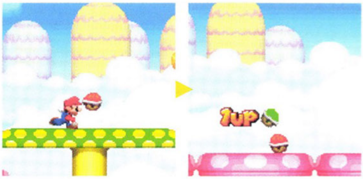
You can beat the game without visiting Worlds 4 and 7, but you'll need to collect all of the Star Coins on all of the worlds to unlock everything!

What Are Some Good Ways to Earn Extra Lives?

It's no fun to lose several levels worth of progress by running out of lives, so take every opportunity to stock up on 1-Ups. You can bash 1-Up Mushrooms out of blocks, earn them as Mega Mario, and win them in green Toad houses, plus you can earn instant 1-Ups by chaining together enemy kills using the methods shown here. The progress bars in our examples will help you find the spots.

1-UP CHAIN REACTIONS

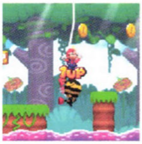
When you beat multiple enemies with a single action, whether it's a thrown Koopa shell or a series of stomp attacks in which Mario's feet don't touch the ground, the points you earn will double for each successive enemy you defeat. When your last kill earns 8,000 points, every subsequent kill will earn you a 1-Up!



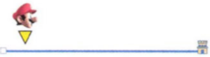
Toad Says . . .

In addition to throwing Koopa shells at lines of foes, Mario can use his own Koopa-shell form to chain a series of enemy kills—just get a running start!

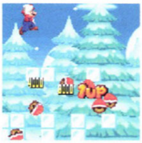
World 4-1



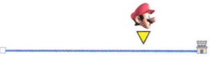
By jumping from enemy to enemy (hold down the jump button to bounce off of foes), Mario can rack up point multipliers and ultimately 1-Ups.



World 5-B



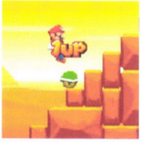
Koopa shells make for safe and easy 1-Up chains, since the Koopa does all the work. You just need to toss a shell in the right direction and run along with it to collect the points.



THE LEGENDARY 1-UP TRICK

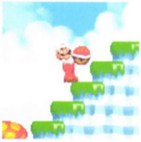
This trick is a classic from the original Super Mario Bros., and it still works like a charm! If you stomp a Koopa so its shell lands on the lip of a step, you can jump straight onto the shell, then release the jump button. Mario will bounce up and down, kicking it repeatedly against the step for infinite 1-Ups.

World 2-4



An easy opportunity to perform this trick comes at the end of level 2-4. If you can't get the timing and placement right, don't worry—just run a few screens left to make the Koopa reappear.

World 4-2

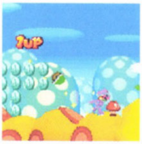


Koopas don't often appear on the shallow steps this trick requires. But on a stage like 4-2, you can grab a Koopa shell elsewhere and take it to the steps.

USE THE STAR POWER

The classic Starman makes you temporarily invincible and able to destroy every enemy you touch, possibly creating a 1-Up chain. Some levels have special ? Blocks that contain a Starman only if you're already using a Starman, so 1-Up-seekers must balance beating foes with searching for the next ? Block.

World 7-3



The Starman on level 7-3 creates a trail of coins behind you, but don't let the moolah distract you—keep moving forward in search of ? Blocks so you can extend your Starman chain.

How Can I Find Every Secret in the Game?

Check out the official New Super Mario Bros. Player's Guide from the pros at Nintendo Power. It contains full maps of each level, which reveal every Star Coin, Invisible Block, and alternate exit. You'll also find detailed strategies for defeating every enemy, and full coverage of the game's unlockable secrets.

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM NINTENDO POWER
NINTENDO DS
New SUPER MARIO BROS.
THE OFFICIAL Nintendo PLAYER'S GUIDE

- Multiplayer tactics!
- Maps for all 80 levels!
- Warps and secrets revealed!
- Tips for grabbing 240 Star Coins!

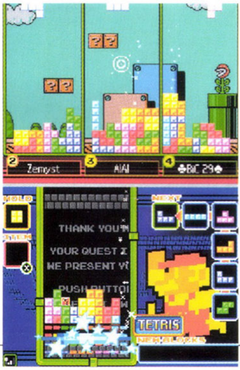
Prime Hunters comes loaded with a voice-over IP system that works amazingly well. Don't have a cell phone, but want to talk to a friend in another state? Hunters will let you reach out and taunt someone—with startling clarity.

If you happen to be one of the two DS owners who still haven't purchased MPH, check out the gaming hub on www.nintendowifi.com (see the Status Quo sidebar). There you can see user stats and find out which hunter is the least popular. As of this writing it's Noxus, but who knows what it will be tomorrow?

24/7 Block Party

Nintendo handhelds are to Tetris as salt is to pepper, and for good reason—Tetris is the puzzle game that started it all. However, Tetris DS isn't your momma's Tetris. No longer are you safe to beat level 9, height 5, and consider yourself the greatest Tetris master to walk the earth. No! Instead, you'll lie awake in bed, knowing full well that someone somewhere can take you in three out of five games; the horror! If you can man up, though, you are in for a treat—you haven't really lived until you've played Tetris DS over the WFC. You have three modes to choose from: The first is your typical mano-a-mano Tetris match; no gimmicks, no weapons, no banana peels. Just you, your DS, and your moxie. The second is a four-player version in which weapons are allowed and a lot more wackiness can take place. It makes a great alternative to your typical skill-based match, as a lot more luck is involved. Finally, there's Push mode, which takes place on Donkey Kong's old-school tower. Players square off at opposite ends of a field that creates a sort of Tetris-based tug-o'-war. It's another clever take on the typical Tetris mode.

The first time you log on to the WFC, you receive a score of 5,000 points. After you win some games, that score will go up. If instead you lose some . . . well, you know. But your score does more than just shame you or give you bragging rights; you know that players with a score comparable to or better than your own are going to give you your money's worth. Good luck!



Fact #3

In the first week after the game launched, **2 out of every 3 people** who purchased Metroid Prime Hunters also played it online.

Fact #4

In its first week of sales, Tetris DS inspired **133,407 connections**—that's over 13 games played per minute.

Fact #5

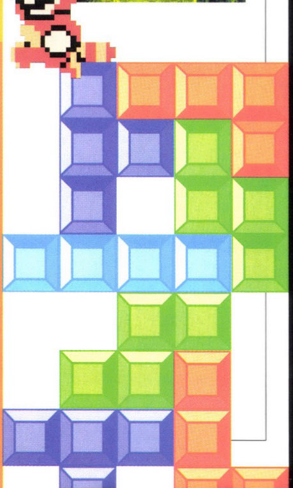
Players logged in to the WFC over **2.5 million times** to play Metroid Prime Hunters in the first month the game was available.

The Future Is Now

The latest game to join the WFC-enabled family is LostMagic, a fantastic RPG with a touch-based spellcasting mechanic. You can duel friends and random foes alike on the WFC.

And coming soon, we have the likes of Contact, another unique RPG with loads of potential, and Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam, which offers a great new take on a proven formula.

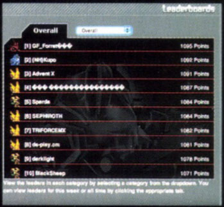
With the Wii knocking on our door, Nintendo's online community is set to grow by leaps and bounds in the coming months, and if all of the Nintendo Wi-Fi games released so far are any indication of what's to come, we are in for one awesome ride! (For even more WFC game announcements, check out this month's News section.)



REGISTER NOW!

Status Quo

If you've headed out on the WFC, but haven't registered your DS at www.nintendowifi.com, what are you waiting for? There's already a bustling community of gamers checking out their stats every day. The site lets you see all the statistics you earn, and make fun of all your friends who can't keep up with you. The award for most detailed stat page goes to Metroid Prime Hunters—It's stat-tastic!

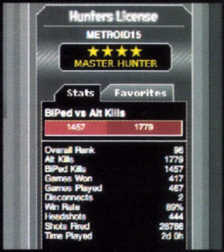


Leaderboards

Overall

[1] GF_Forrest◆◆◆	1095 Points
[2] (NH)Kupo	1092 Points
[3] Advent X	1091 Points
[4] ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆	1087 Points
[5] Sperda	1084 Points
[6] SEPHIROTH	1064 Points
[7] TRIFORCEMX	1082 Points
[8] de-play.cn	1081 Points
[9] darklight	1078 Points
[10] BlackSheep	1071 Points

If you register your DS and play hunters online, you'll see how you rank globally.



Hunters License

METROID15

★★★★
MASTER HUNTER

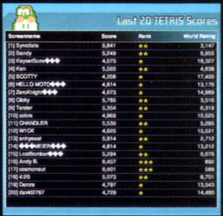
Stats | Favorites

BiPed vs Alt Kills

1457 | 1779

Overall Rank	96
Alt Kills	1779
BiPed Kills	1457
Games Won	417
Games Played	467
Disconnects	2
Win Rate	89%
Headshots	444
Shots Fired	28786
Time Played	2d 0h

You'll also get a detailed Hunters License, viewable by friends and foes.



Last 20 TETRIS Scores

Screenname	Score	Rank	World Rating
[1] SyncGate	5,841	★★	3,147
[2] Sandy	5,249	★★	6,955
[3] KeyserSoze◆◆◆	4,070	★	18,327
[4] Ken	5,565	★★	4,836
[5] SCOTTY	4,358	★	17,400
[6] HELLO MOTO◆◆◆	4,814	★	13,176
[7] ZeroKnight◆◆◆	4,673	★	14,989
[8] Clicky	5,785	★★	3,516
[9] Tarsier	5,354	★★	6,319
[10] cobra	4,969	★	10,525
[11] CHANDLER	5,530	★★	5,095
[12] W1CK	4,625	★	15,521
[13] anhyeast	5,914	★★	2,712
[14] ◆◆◆MEIER◆◆◆	4,814	★	13,212
[15] LostBomber◆◆◆	5,294	★★	6,676
[16] Andy B.	6,457	★★★	892
[17] cosmonaut	6,601	★★★	588
[18] 4:20	5,073	★★	6,701
[19] Danza	4,797	★	13,543
[20] david2787	4,729	★	14,480

Stop by the Tetris DS page, and check your ranking—or just admire the art.

Wow, I can hear you clear as a bell! OK, bus driver, you'd better check yourself before I have to do it for you!

HARVEST MOON®
Magical Melody

summer 10 Thu
am07:50

winter 15 Sat
am06:50

Ray
I'll replace your
rod with a
new one just like I promised!

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- ♪ Plant crops, raise livestock, dig for gems or just fish!
- ♪ Purchase land and furniture to expand your farming empire!
- ♪ Beat your farming rival in the fields and at the festivals!
- ♪ Unlock hidden multiplayer mini games!

Create Your Own Magical Tune!!

spring 9 Tue
am 10:00

spring 5 Fri
am 09:00

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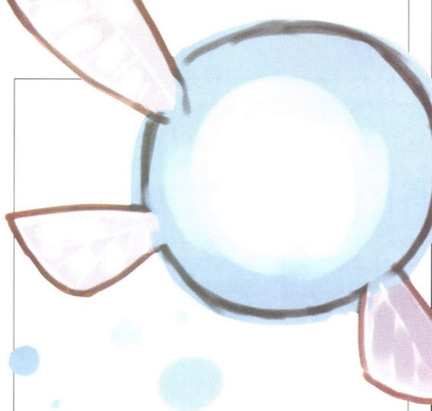
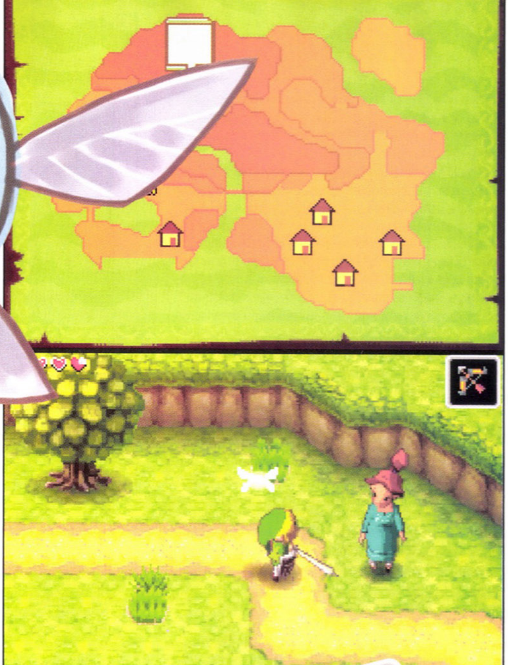
TOUCHED BY A LEGEND

The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass lets players make contact with the Zelda world like never before.

By Chris Hoffman





At the conclusion of The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker on Nintendo GameCube, Hyrule was buried beneath the waves, Ganondorf was turned to stone, and Link and Princess Zelda had set off across the sea. Now the legend continues on Nintendo DS as the heroes encounter a new world and an entirely new gameplay experience.

When Link, Tetra (also known as her era's Princess Zelda), and her band of pirates set sail to find new lands at the end of The Wind Waker, players were left wondering where the intrepid adventurers would go and what they'd discover next. As it turns out, trouble. Several months after beginning his journey, an encounter with a mysterious, fog-enshrouded ship results in Link falling into the ocean. Upon being helped back to consciousness by a friendly fairy, Link finds himself on an unfamiliar island without his boat or his companions. A new adventure has begun.

The mysterious new surroundings aren't Link's only step into uncharted territory, however. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass is the renowned series' first venture onto Nintendo DS, and the journey onto new hardware delivers a completely different take on the Zelda gameplay that makes full use of the DS's touch screen and other features. Instead of moving Link directly via the Control Pad, players will be able to guide him by dragging the stylus along the touch screen.

"My main objective was to develop a Zelda game controlled only

> **"My main objective was to develop a Zelda game controlled only with the stylus."**
>
> —Eiji Aonuma

with the stylus," explains Phantom Hourglass producer Eiji Aonuma. "The sense of wonder and surprise will satisfy existing Zelda fans, but I would really like people who've never played Zelda before to experience this game too."

Similar to fairies that have given Link advice in previous Zelda games, the fairy in Phantom Hourglass acts as his guide—one that functions as a player-directed onscreen cursor that shows Link where to go. The new control scheme lets Link remain as maneuverable as ever; you can make him perform his roll technique by quickly sliding the stylus along the screen, and if you guide him toward a pit, he'll jump automatically, like he does in his recent console adventures. His other moves come just as naturally. When you tap an object such as a barrel or a rock, Link will pick it up; depending on whether you then tap the ground near Link or far away from him, he'll either put the object down gently or hurl it toward the intended destination. By making a back-and-forth swiping motion you'll cause Link to swing his sword toward the fairy's location, and by quickly drawing a circle around Link you'll unleash his trademark 360-degree spin attack.

"Making the player feel like part of a realistic Zelda world has always been a main objective of Zelda game development," Aonuma comments. "Intuitive play control via the stylus contributes a lot toward achieving this goal. Moving Link, swinging Link's sword by slashing at enemies, and other intuitive touch-panel controls will make you feel you are really in the world of Phantom Hourglass." The good old Control Pad won't be completely neglected though; it may act as a shortcut or a quick-select mechanism of some sort.

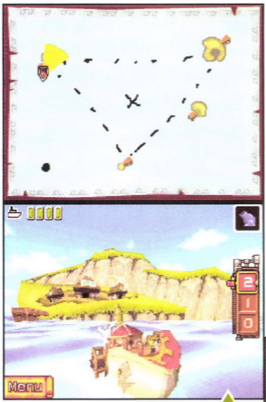
Tactile Tactics

Like always, Link will have access to various tools and items throughout his quest, but with touch-screen enhancements. By tapping an onscreen tab or holding down the L or R Button (Phantom Hourglass is lefty-friendly), you can switch from the sword to an alternate item, then touch the screen as needed to activate the item. You can control Link's boomerang, for example, by drawing a path that it will follow, making it more useful and precise than ever. Bombs, meanwhile, can be thrown with a simple tap. Other familiar implements, such as the bow, a Hookshot-like tool, and some form of musical instrument will return with new play mechanics, but details on how they'll work are still under wraps. Additionally, Link will rescue multiple fairies throughout his adventure, and each will change Link's actions in different—and as-yet-unrevealed—ways.

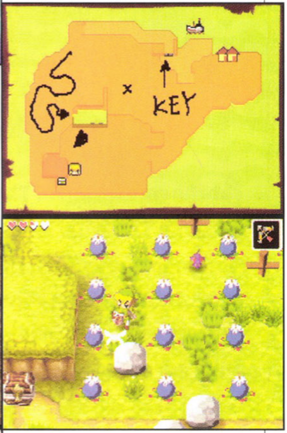
As for the titular Phantom Hourglass? "Of course, the 'Hourglass' in the title somehow relates to an important game mechanic," teases Aonuma. "I cannot talk about more than that at this point, but something like the time manipulation in Majora's Mask is not a bad guess."

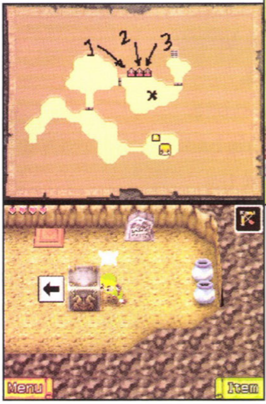
Another item taking full advantage of the DS's features is the map. Usually the map resides on the DS's upper screen, but by pressing a button on the touch screen, you can bring it to the bottom screen, allowing you to make notes about anything you wish, such as obstacles that you'll need to return to later. In the E3 demo of the game,

> "The sense of wonder and surprise will satisfy existing Zelda fans, but I would really like people who've never played Zelda before to experience this game too."



While traveling the high seas, the map is used for both drawing your route and taking notes. When you're not writing on the map, you stow it on the top screen.





After you maneuver Link near a movable object, you can push or pull it by using the stylus to drag the arrow icon.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS
TWILIGHT PRINCESS UPDATE!

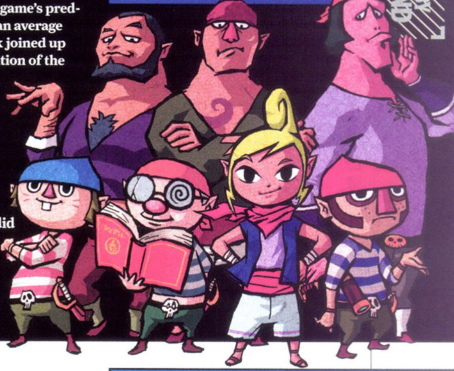
Phantom Hourglass isn't the only Zelda game that will feature innovative new controls. After months without new details on Twilight Princess, Aonuma—who's both director and producer on TP—revealed that he's hard at work adding extra functionality to the Wii version of the game. On the Wii, players will be able to move Link using the analog stick on the nunchuk portion of the controller, while the direct-pointing function is used for positioning Navi to interact with objects. Attacking will be accomplished through traditional button presses, and the Control Pad will access Link's items. Aonuma also disclosed that Twilight Princess on Wii will have a realistically controlled fishing minigame designed by Kazuaki Morita, the programmer who created the fishing game in Ocarina of Time. Additionally, he revealed that a new item in Twilight Princess—magnetic boots—will let Link walk on the ceiling! Although Aonuma didn't state specifics, he mentioned that as he and his team create touch-screen features for Phantom Hourglass, it often inspires new ideas for Twilight Princess that may come to fruition through the Wii's motion-sensitive controller. Even though Phantom Hourglass and Twilight Princess are being developed concurrently, however, Aonuma says there will be no interconnectivity between the two games because they are set in separate eras.

LINK'S REAWAKENING

Like the Wind

The developers are designing Phantom Hourglass so that people who've never played a Zelda game before will feel at home instantly, but that's no excuse for not getting up to speed on the game's predecessor. At the outset of The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker on GCN, Link was just an average youth living with his grandmother, but when a giant bird captured his sister Aryll, Link joined up with pirate leader Tetra and her motley crew to rescue his sis. That led to Link's acquisition of the legendary Master Sword. After using the blade to save Aryll, Link learned that Tetra was actually descended from Princess Zelda, that the Hyrule of old (as seen in The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time) was hidden beneath the sea, and that the evil Ganondorf was planning to use the Triforce to bring the kingdom back—but under his evil rule. Following a lengthy quest—which concluded when Link plunged the Master Sword into Ganondorf's skull, petrifying him as the water washed away the old Hyrule—Link, Tetra, and the pirates sailed off to find a new land to call their own.

In addition to providing the starting point for Phantom Hourglass's tale, The Wind Waker introduced numerous elements that have carried over into the sequel. Not only did The Wind Waker's vast ocean set the stage for Phantom Hourglass's wet-and-wild world view, but it also introduced the bright, expressive, toon-shaded art style. The Wind Waker received high praise from gamers and critics alike (including winning Nintendo Power's award for Best Overall Game of 2003), so if you haven't played it yet, what are you waiting for?



signs visually point out significant locations, which you can transfer to the map easily thanks to the handy note-taking feature.

Big Bads, Big Blue

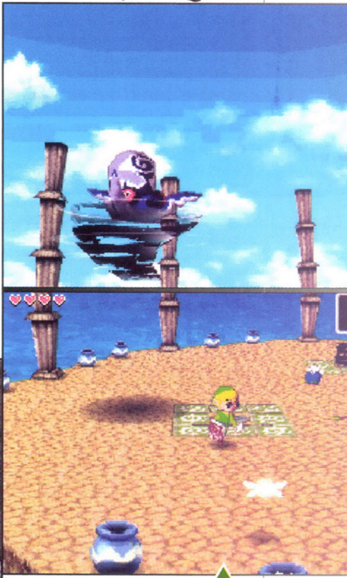
To go along with Link's new abilities, many of his enemies are getting makeovers for Phantom Hourglass. Familiar foes like Octoroks, Keese, and ChuChus return, but they won't necessarily be as you remember them; some may have new abilities or weaknesses that are a more appropriate match for Link's touch-screen-driven moves. The bosses' alterations are probably most obvious: All boss battles are designed with two screens in mind. In that early version of the game, one boss fight places Link on the bottom screen while the boss hovers overhead on the top screen. Link's objective is to toss bombs into whirlwinds, which launch the explosives skyward. Once a bomb makes contact with the boss, it'll knock the foe to the ground, allowing Link to slice and dice it with his sword.

One enemy not likely to appear is the dreaded Ganondorf. After being defeated by Link and Zelda at the end of The Wind Waker, Ganondorf himself is no longer a threat, but according to Aonuma, his evil influence spread across the Great Sea before his demise. Exactly how Ganondorf's dark legacy plays out in Phantom Hourglass has yet to be revealed.

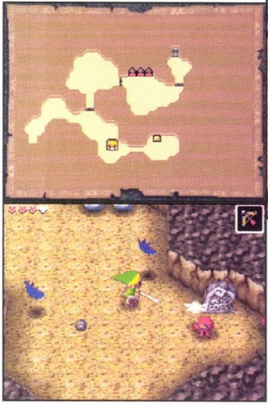
> “Making the player feel like part of a realistic Zelda world has always been a main objective of Zelda game development. Intuitive play control via the stylus contributes a lot toward achieving this goal.”

While many aspects of Phantom Hourglass are different from The Wind Waker's, one that isn't is the emphasis on ocean exploration. Once again, the deep blue sea makes up the majority of the overworld, and Link must make his way to numerous islands as he uncovers the game's mysteries. But what has been updated is the way that ocean exploration works. Instead of relying on a sailboat (the *King of Red Lions* is absent this time), Link gets to travel by paddle steamer, which comes complete with a roguish, sometimes comedic, captain. “He has kind of a similar purpose as Han Solo did for Luke Skywalker,” Aonuma notes.

All Link needs to do is chart a course to make the ship take off; in gameplay terms, that means calling up the ocean map and drawing your own route with the stylus, preferably avoiding treacherous rocks and other hazards. If needed, you can halt the ship and replot the course at any time. However, navigating the ocean is only half the task. Having noted the criticisms levied at The Wind Waker's sailing segments, the development team has made the Phantom Hourglass's waters significantly more dangerous. Seafaring enemies are far more plentiful this time around, but it takes only a tap of the stylus to lob a cannon shot anywhere you choose (good thing you



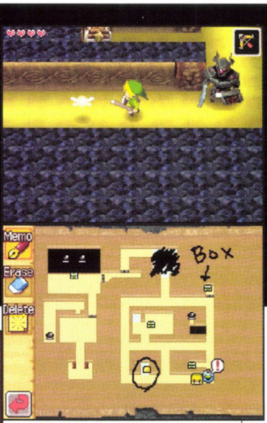
Boss battles, like the one shown above, are designed with two screens in mind. When you hit it with a bomb, the boss will get slammed onto the bottom screen.



FILLING THE HOURGLASS

From Four to Phantom

Given that its existence was reported more than a year ago, The Legend of Zelda's DS incarnation didn't come as a huge surprise when Nintendo president Satoru Iwata unveiled it at the 2006 Game Developers Conference. The big shock was that it was revealed as primarily a single-player Zelda title, not a Four Swords multiplayer game as had been indicated previously. According to Aonuma, the development team (which had worked on Four Swords Adventures for GCN) was originally experimenting with a Four Swords game for DS; however, after they discovered how well toon-shaded 3-D visuals worked on DS, they were inspired to make a sequel to Wind Waker instead. Aonuma hopes that the touch-screen control in Phantom Hourglass will set a standard that other DS Zelda games—including any new Four Swords titles—will follow.



have infinite ammo), while sliding the stylus across the screen will let you spin around for a full view of the maritime surroundings.

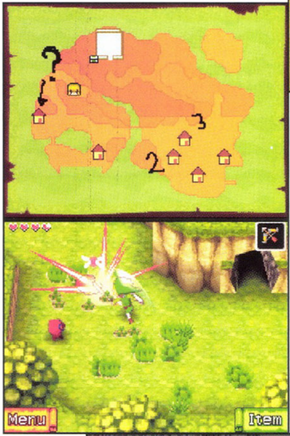
The Chase Is On

Although Link's ultimate goal (other than reuniting with his allies) in Phantom Hourglass is still a mystery, Aonuma has revealed that the game structure has changed a bit relative to previous Zeldas': The game features a single, primary dungeon that Link must overcome to reach his objective. However, the dungeon will become impassible at certain points, requiring Link to venture into separate dungeons throughout the world. Only by conquering the smaller dungeons will he be able to advance through the main one.

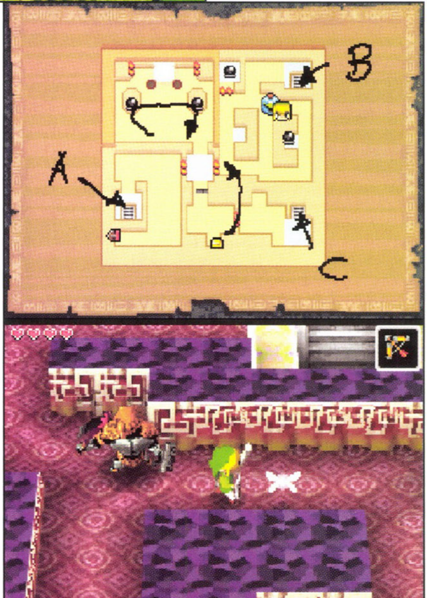
And the dungeons contain what may be Link's toughest challenge yet: enemies that Aonuma calls "chasers." These fierce foes will stalk Link mercilessly once they see or hear him, and not only are they invulnerable to his attacks, but they can end his quest with a single hit. Luckily, the in-game map shows the chasers' movements once they become active, allowing you to plan a route to avoid them, and the dungeons contain sanctuary zones where the chasers cannot tread. Additionally, certain jars, when thrown, can create small sanctuaries at locations of your choosing, rendering Link immune to the chasers' wrath.

The chasers also play a key part in another one of Phantom Hourglass's standout new features: a two-player versus mode. Part capture-the-flag and part hide-and-seek, the game's versus mode casts one player as the attacking side (controlling Link from the traditional overhead perspective) and the other as the defending side (controlling three chasers via a map). It's up to the attacker to guide Link through a mazelike arena to grab Force Gems and bring them safely back to his base, while the defender gets to control the chasers' routes (by drawing paths with the stylus) in an attempt to stop Link dead in his tracks. Though the three-on-one odds might not seem fair, the catch is that the attacker gets a complete view of the action via a map on the upper screen, but the defender can't see Link unless the attacker is in a chaser's direct line of sight or the defender activates a limited-use ability to see Link's position. After Link gets caught or the time limit expires, the players change roles; whoever has acquired the most Force Gems after a set number of rounds wins. When you factor in advanced tactics like stealing Force Gems from your opponent's base, and the complexity of controlling three chasers at once, the result is deep versus combat that ensures a completely different, very strategic take on multiplayer Zelda action.

Many of Phantom Hourglass's secrets remain under wraps, including how the microphone will be utilized, and how prominently drawing symbols will factor into the gameplay. (The drawing of the hourglass symbol to unlock a door, as seen in the game trailer, was implemented specifically for demo purposes.) As of press time, we also haven't confirmed a release date for the game. If there's one thing The Legend of Zelda series has taught us, however, it's that the payoff is always worth the wait.



"Moving Link, swinging Link's sword by slashing at enemies, and other intuitive touch-panel controls will make you feel you are really in the world of Phantom Hourglass."



Link's quest will come to an abrupt end if he's caught by the chaser that's hot on his tail.

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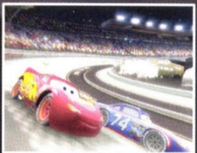

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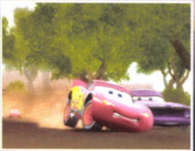
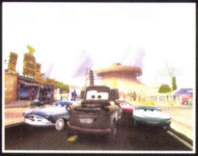


Make friends eat your dust in multiplayer mode!



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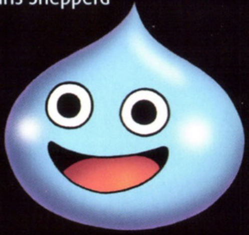
SLIME TIME

It's wild tank-on-tank action as Square Enix rumbles onto DS with Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime.

By Chris Shepperd

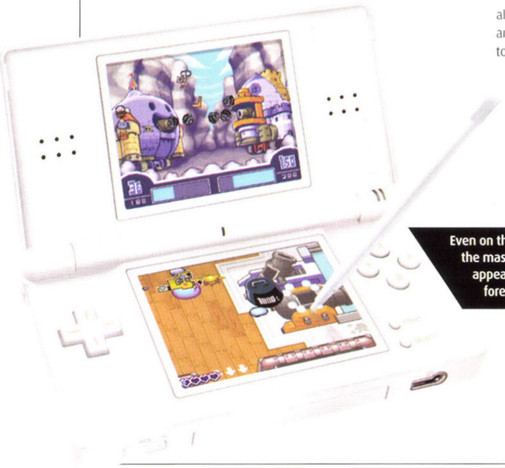


After years of playing a supporting role as the famed slime from the long-running Dragon Quest series, the blue blob steals the spotlight. In his first solo adventure, our new leading, um . . . man gets a name: Rocket.

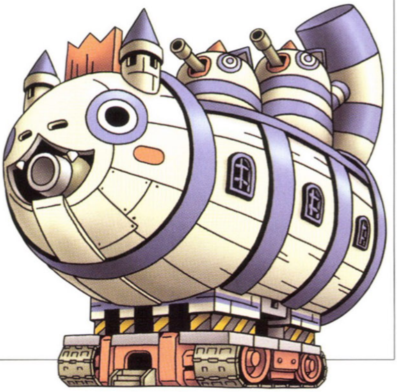
It seems the Kingdom of Slimenia has been overrun by a cartel of bad guys called the Plob, monsters characterized by their huge tails; the more tails they have, the higher-ranked they are in society. The Plob has been imprisoning the citizens of Slimenia's capitol city, Boingburg, in chests all over the world. It's up to Rocket, the lone uncaptured slime, to take on the Plob and free his fellow residents. Your mission is to release all of the other slimes across the globe by slamming into the boxes where they're confined. As you release them, they will provide you with reports on the DS's upper screen to help you find your other friends.

Throughout the game, the top screen will also display information about the friends and enemies you've already sent back to town. Even with aid from the rescued slimes, it's not going to be easy to find them all: Rocket will have to navigate all sorts of tricky puzzles throughout the world. You'll often see a trapped slime in a level, but not be able to reach it until later in the game.

You'll control Rocket from a bird's-eye view on the bottom screen, and move him around using only the Control Pad and the A and B Buttons. He can jump into the air when you press the A Button, then hover if you hit A again. Rocket can also perform a move called the Elasto Blast—hold down the A Button, stretch out in the direction you want to fire the little guy, much like shooting a rubber band, and when you've lined up your target, let go of the A Button to shoot Rocket in that direction. The Elasto Blast will knock whatever it hits (including enemies) into the air—if you manage to get under what you hit while it's still in the air, it will land on Rocket's back. Rocket can then ship his bounty back to town via carts that run through the stages. It's important



Even on the DS screen, the massive tanks appear impressively foreboding.



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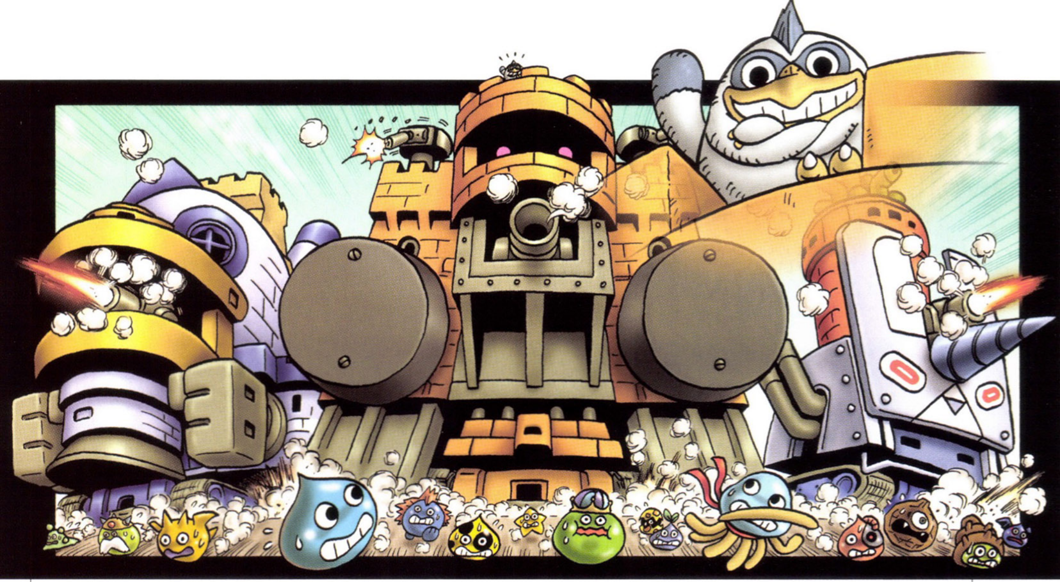
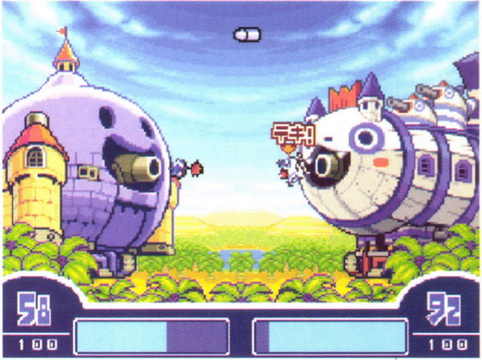


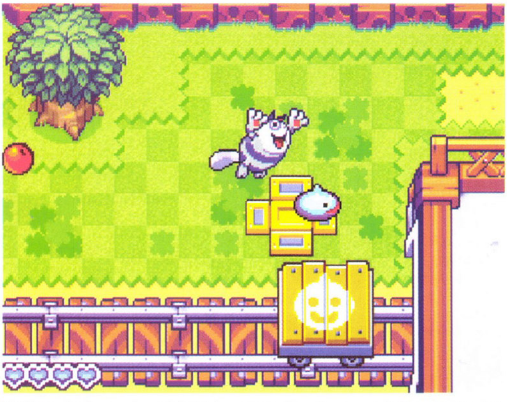
to collect everything you can—the stuff you find becomes essential later in the game and in the multiplayer modes (you can use any items that you've sent back to town).

At the climax of every single-player level, not only will you face a boss, but you'll also have to compete in a tank battle. The tank battles are really the focal point of Rocket Slime—virtually everything you collect and every slime you save can have a role in the fights; you are allowed to enlist the slimes you've rescued to help you defeat your opponent's tank, then set their AI to behave how you'd like.

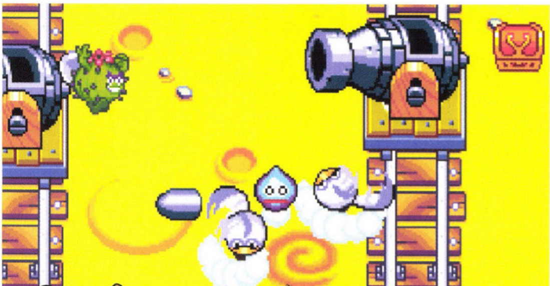
The tanks are all roughly evenly equipped—each has two cannons, ammo dispensers, a power core, and a gate to the outside world. But the tanks have their differences, as well—the interiors are designed to be confusing to your opponents, so when they infiltrate your fortress, they'll have trouble getting around in your vehicles.

You can choose which items you want at your disposal during the battle. Much of the game's strategy is in choosing what you'll have available to knock your opponent's projectiles out of the sky. The items you find do various amounts of damage against your opponent's tank, and some items have





Watch your back—members of the Plob are everywhere. Once you gain the upper hand on your enemy, toss him on the railcart and send him to the town clink.



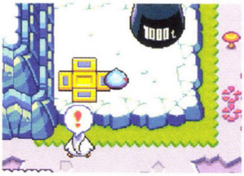
As the last Slimenian standing, Rocket is definitely a marked slime. The Plob is gonna do its best to stop you from releasing any more citizens.

additional traits, as well. For example, you can fire a giant shield out of the cannon that will block anything your enemy shoots at you. Or you can launch a fireball that will set an opponent's tank on fire, and he won't be able to shoot at you until the flames are extinguished. You can also shoot your teammates, enemies, or even yourself over to the other tank—it's often faster than walking between the two machines.

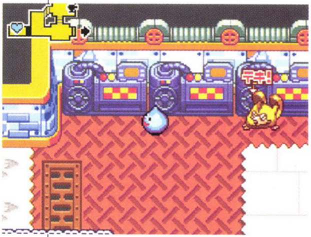
When the battle begins, the ammo dispensers will start kicking out the stuff you've loaded into your tank. You have to grab the items quickly using the Elasto Blast and bring them back to the giant cannons. The two cannons in each tank are pointed at two different trajectories, and aimed so that if both of the tanks fire from cannons on the same level, the projectiles will hit each other. While you move in and around your tank on the bottom screen, the top screen shows which projectiles are currently in the air. For the most part, the items move slowly, allowing you time to counterattack appropriately.

Once an opponent's tank has taken a sufficient beating, you must infiltrate it and destroy it from the inside out. The tank has inner defenses that you'll have to break through—barriers will slow you down while your opponents try to catch you. If you can make it through those and knock out the tank's power source, you'll win.

The tank battles are also the meat of the multiplayer experience. Up to four people can compete at a time, either in two-on-two or one-on-three battles. After you determine your team alignments, each side selects a tank. When several of us at NP first tried our hands at the tank melees, the dizzying, nonstop action had our heads spinning. There's a lot of movement, but the basic point is to fire anything and everything at your opponent's tank until its armor is depleted. Then, as in the single-player game, you must get into its core and destroy its power source to finish off the behemoth. The battles are complicated at first, but once you get a grasp of what's going on, they become totally enthralling—we didn't want to stop playing.



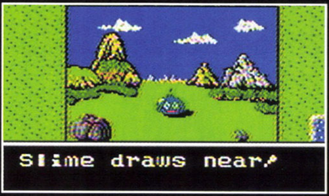
The number of ways to approach each battle is nearly infinite—do you load up on an arsenal of powerful but slow projectiles, or pepper your opponent's tank with weaker, faster ammo? Do you play defensively and stay inside your own tank, or do you take the fight to their turf? Rocket Slime's complex strategies and hyperactive gameplay have the makings of a very special multiplayer experience that we're eager for more of.



Computers and equipment line the walls of the tanks. Destroy them in your opponent's tank to slow their progress.

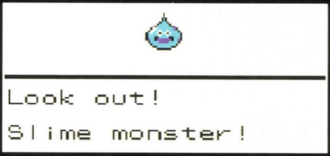
History of the Slime, Part 1

The Dragon Quest series introduced the little blue fella over 20 years ago. In that time, he has become one of the franchise's strongest icons. Check out some of the classic games that have featured the slime's smilin' face.



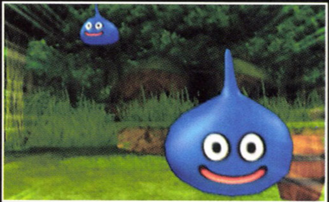
Slime draws near!

The slime's first North American appearance came in the classic RPG Dragon Warrior for the NES in 1989.



Look out!
Slime monster!

The slime has been both friend and enemy, or both, like in Dragon Warrior Monsters for the Game Boy Color.



Most recently, the Slime made an early and dynamic showing in Dragon Quest 8 for PlayStation 2.

And of course, former NP staff member Alan looks very familiar, as well . . .

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Classified Info

Nobody likes a cheater. Except us.

Brick Tricks

>LEGO *STAR WARS*: THE VIDEO GAME (GCN)

The Force is pretty powerful, but even it can't unlock the characters and wacky extra features of LEGO *Star Wars*: The Video Game the way these cheat codes can. To use them, go to the counter in Dexter's Diner and select the Enter Codes option, then enter whatever codes you desire. Although the extras will become available instantly (pause the game to toggle them on or off), before you can play as unlocked characters, you'll have to purchase them with LEGO studs.

Characters

Battle Droid (Security):
KF999A

Battle Droid:
987UYR

Battle Droid (Commander):
EN11K5

Droideka:
DH382U

Royal Guard:
PP43JX

Padmé:
92UJ7D

Darth Maul:
H35TUX

Clone:
F8B4L6

Geonosian:
19D7NB

Battle Droid (Geonosis):
LK42U6

Super Battle Droid:
XZNR21

Jango Fett:
PL47NH

Boba Fett:
LA811Y

Luminara:
A725X4

Ki-Adi-Mundi:
DP55MV

Kit Fisto:
CBR954

Shaak Ti:
EUW862

Count Dooku:
14PGMN

Grievous' Bodyguard:
ZTY392

General Grievous:
SF321Y

Clone (Episode III):
ER33JN

Clone (Episode III, Pilot):
BHU72T

Clone (Episode III, Swamp):
N3T6P8

Clone (Episode III, Walker):
RS6E25

Mace Windu (Episode III):
MS952L

Disguised Clone:
VR832U

Darth Sidious:
A32CAM

Rebel Trooper:
L54YUK

Princess Leia:
BEQ82H

Extras

Invincibility:
4PR28U

Silhouette Mode:
MS999Q

Purple Lightsabers:
YD77GC

Moustache Mode:
RP924W

Minikit Detector:
LD116B

Teacup Weapons:
PUCEAT

Brush Weapons:
SHRUB1

Big Blasters:
IG72X4

Classic Blasters:
L449HD

Silly Blasters:
NR37W1

Limitless Possibilities

>DISNEY'S KIM POSSIBLE: KIMMUNICATOR

When naked mole rats just aren't enough, use these codes to give Kim the edge she needs. During gameplay, hold L and R, then press the button sequence for the code of your choice. When you release L and R, the code will go into effect.

Gain an Extra Life:
A A A Y X Y

Unlock All Outfits:
B A X Y A B

99 Lives:
A A A Y X Y B A

BUENO NACHO
WEAR

Unlock All Levels:
X Y Y X A X B

Restore Health:
A A A Y

Maximum Currency:
Y Y X B A Y

Unlock All Gadgets:
Y Y X B A Y Y A

Invincibility:
Y Y Y X A B

New Sights and Sounds

>BUST-A-MOVE DS

Bust-a-Move DS's standard puzzle mode offers 250 stages, but you can double that number by entering the code for the nighttime-themed Another World, which boasts completely new challenges. When you just can't bust another move, you can relax to the tunes in the game's sound test.

Another World:
At the title screen, press A, left, right, A.

Sound Test:
At the title screen, press Select, A, B, left, right, A, Select, right.

Cold Comfort

>ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN (GCN)

When you're battling mother nature, you need every advantage you can get, including these cheat codes. To use them, pause the game, then input the directions quickly using either the Control Pad or the Control Stick.

Level Select:
↑ → → ← → → ↓ ↓

Unlock All Bonuses:
↓ ← ↑ ↓ ↓ ← → →

Infinite Pebbles:
↓ ↓ ← ↑ ↑ → ↑ ↓

Rangs to Riches

>TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 3: NIGHT OF THE QUINKAN (GCN)

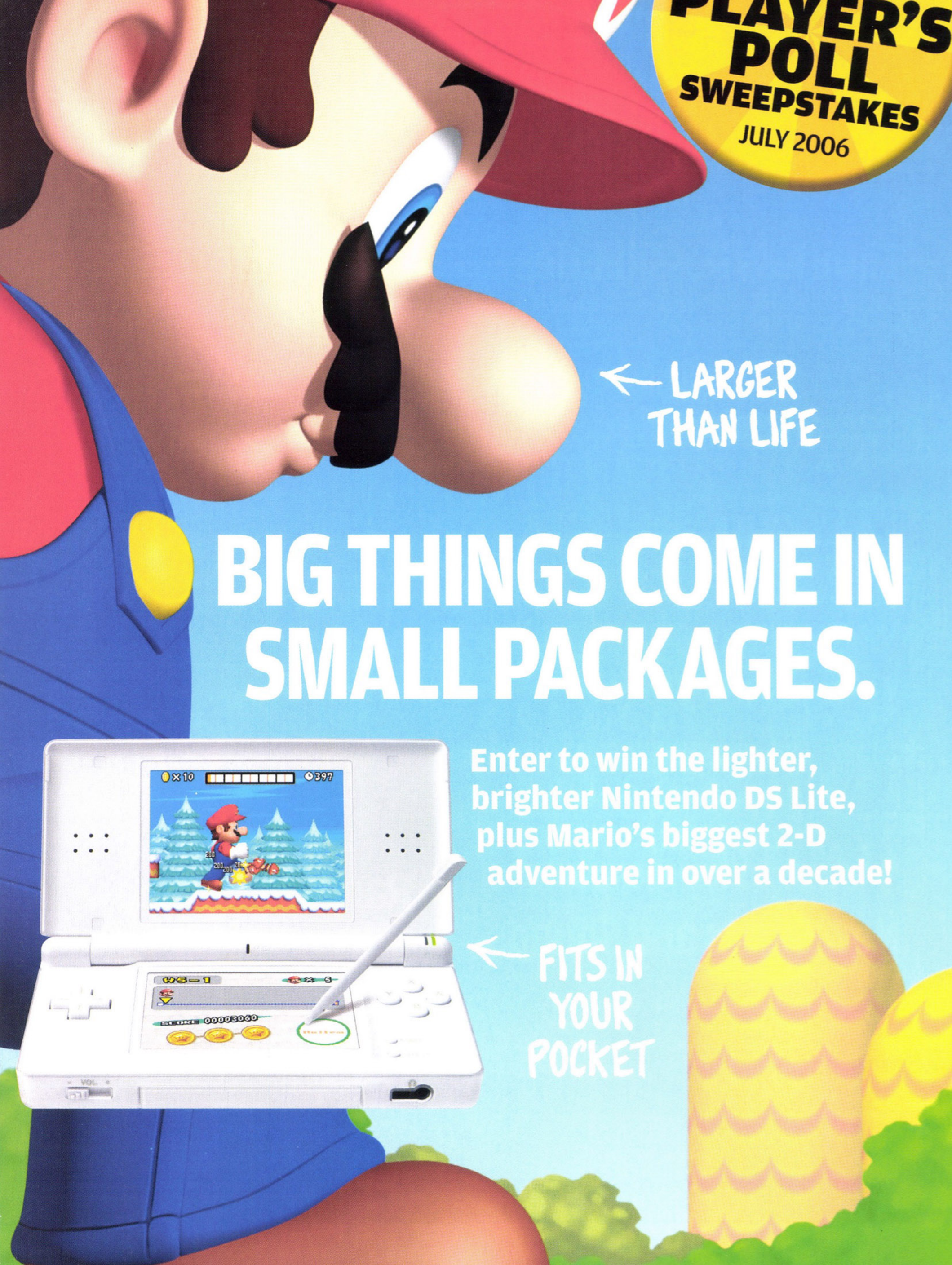
Fighting Quinkan is nasty business, so give Ty some extra thunder from down under by using these codes; you can input them any time during gameplay. You can enter the 100,000 opals code multiple times to really increase your bank account.

Get 100,000 Opals:
Start, Start, Y, Start, Start, Y, X, A, X, A

Get All Rang Chassis:
Start, Start, Y, Start, Start, Y, X, B, X, B

PLAYER'S POLL SWEEPSTAKES

JULY 2006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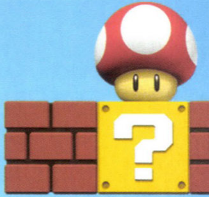

THIRD PRIZE

50 WINNERS

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P.O. BOX 97062
REDMOND, WA 98073-9762

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BACK FROM THE BRINK

Proving that rumors of her demise have been greatly exaggerated, Lara Croft returns to top form in **Tomb Raider: Legend.**

By Steve Thomason

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

© 2006 Core Design Ltd. Developed by Crystal Dynamics, Inc. Published by Eidos, Inc.

Has any pop-culture figure in recent years been dragged through the mud more than Tomb Raider's Lara Croft? (The proverbial mud; get your mind out of the gutter.) When her first game hit back in 1996, the virtual heroine became a gaming icon almost overnight. And deservedly so; the original Tomb Raider, clunky as it may seem by today's standards, was groundbreaking at the time. But Eidos and developer Core Design continued to crank out sequel after sequel on an almost annual basis. The quality of the games suffered as a result, each one feeling less inspired than the last. Once Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness (and the equally mediocre film sequel) rolled around in 2003, the series had squandered all of its good will among even the most devoted fans, and Lara's days at the top seemed but a distant memory.

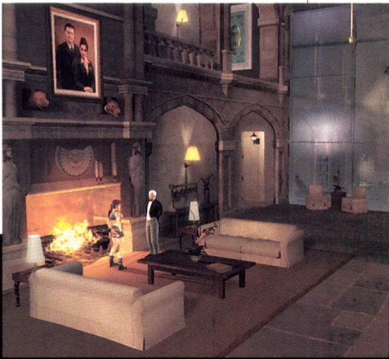
> **Crystal Dynamics has ... rebuilt everything from the ground up.**

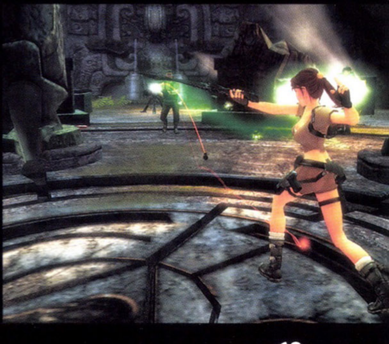
After some much-needed time off, however, Ms. Croft has her sights set on a comeback. Guided by a new development team at Crystal Dynamics (the folks responsible for Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver) and reunited with Tomb Raider cocreator Toby Gard, she'll make her Nintendo home-console debut this fall with Tomb Raider: Legend for GCN. Judging by our time with the game thus far, it looks like Lara's finally got her groove back.

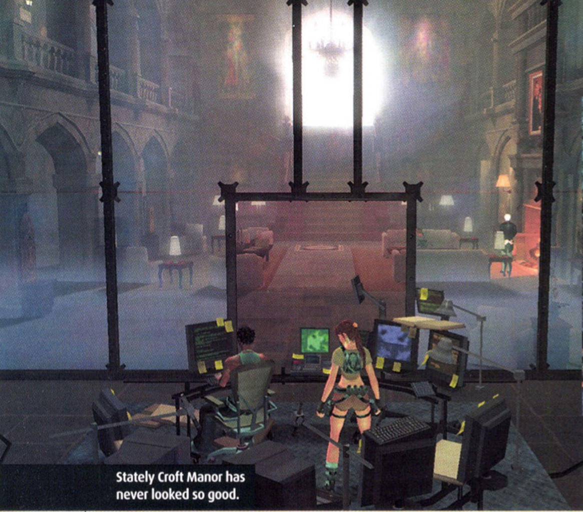
What's Old Is New Again

At its core, Tomb Raider was essentially about taking the puzzle-platforming concepts of the original Prince of Persia games into the third dimension. But while the PoP series has benefited greatly from a makeover of its own, Tomb Raider stubbornly refused to get with the times. With each successive sequel, the archaic, grid-based level design and the main character's robotic movements became increasingly frustrating. Heroes in other games could move around naturally—why couldn't Lara? Well, now she can. Crystal Dynamics has scrapped the crumbling mechanics at the root of the series' slow decay, and rebuilt everything from the ground up. As a result, Lara moves with an agility and grace that would impress even the Prince of Persia.

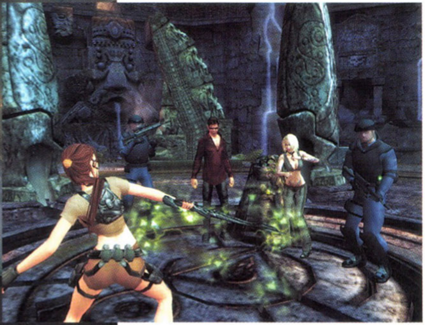
While reinventing the way the game feels, Legend also manages to recapture what made the original Tomb Raider so successful by returning to the principles of its level design. The game starts with Lara outside an abandoned temple high in the mountains of Bolivia. After scaling the sheer face of a cliff (and admiring the breathtaking waterfall cascading nearby), she has to make her way over the rocky crags to

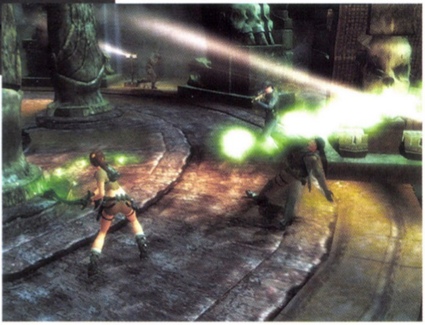






Stately Croft Manor has never looked so good.





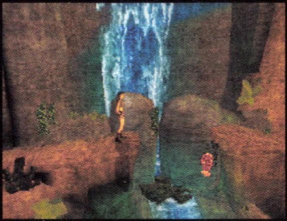
the interior of the ruins, then avoid myriad deadly hazards within the temple as she searches for a legendary artifact. It all flows together seamlessly, combining acrobatic platforming challenges with mind-bending environmental puzzles. And unlike in her other recent adventures, she actually spends the majority of her time in such tombs. Sure, she might slip into her little black dress and attend a party for high-society types in downtown Tokyo just to keep things interesting. But as such nights on the town inevitably lead to swinging from high-rise scaffolding, they feel no less adventurous. And whatever her destination, the environments are consistently as impressive and daunting as any the globetrotting archaeologist has visited.

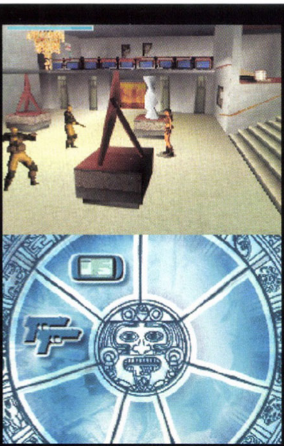
Packin' Heat

Though the pace of the puzzle-platforming sequences is probably best described as methodical, things pick up significantly when Lara encounters nefarious types looking to send her to a tomb of her own. Gunfights are sprinkled liberally throughout the adventure, and there's a lot more to them than in previous Tomb Raider titles. Since Lara is frequently outnumbered by some pretty savvy enemies, it's important to take advantage of her surroundings. She can duck behind cover (though a lot of objects in the game are destructible, so she musn't dillydally), as well as fire at special environmental targets to detonate nearby explosives, collapse structures on top of her foes, and all kinds of other fun stuff. As in previous TR games, a lock-on targeting system allows Lara to fire while on the move, but the farther she is from the target, the less accurate her shots will be. For better precision, you can switch to an over-the-shoulder perspective

POCKET RAIDER

Put Lara in the palm of your hand with two portable versions of Tomb Raider: Legend.





The DS iteration of Tomb Raider: Legend is essentially a scaled-down version of its console big brother. Lara's got all of the same moves and equipment (including the grappling hook), and the game is presented in full 3-D. Movement is primarily restricted from left to right, however, presumably to compensate for the smaller screen and lack of analog control. Most of the time, the touch screen displays Lara's inventory, allowing you to equip different items and weapons on the fly, but it will provide an expanded view of the environment when you reach certain obstacles.

Impressively, the game boasts CG cut-scenes that mirror the GCN version's real-time cinematics, and features quite a bit of voice acting. Hopefully the game's remaining elements come together as well in time for its fall release.

Also due in the fall is Tomb Raider: Legend for the Game Boy Advance. Though it follows the same story and visits the same locales as the other versions, the GBA game is a traditional 2-D side-

and take aim manually. In addition to her trademark dual pistols (complete with infinite ammo), Lara can carry one additional firearm, such as a shotgun or automatic rifle (usually procured from the bodies of her fallen foes). Ms. Croft can also toss grenades, which comes in handy when dealing with multiple enemies at once or trying to flush them out into the open (yes, the bad guys will take cover too).

The presentation is as absorbing as the gameplay, and rivals that of any other game this generation.

Something Borrowed

As part of bringing Tomb Raider up-to-date, Crystal Dynamics wasn't afraid to borrow good ideas from other recent games. Not only does the platforming feel much like the modern Prince of Persia trilogy; Lara is equipped with a grappling hook similar to the one in The Two Thrones. Like the prince, she can use it to climb or drop to different heights, swing across large gaps, and manipulate objects from a distance. She also has binoculars that can scan and analyze various objects a la Metroid Prime. Inspiration from Resident Evil 4 and Shenmue comes in the form of quick-time events: A series of button prompts will suddenly appear onscreen, and inputting them correctly (and quickly) will launch Lara into some truly impressive-looking maneuvers, adding a bit of cinematic flair to the proceedings. Finally, like any action hero worth her salt these days, Lara will occasionally find herself in a high-speed chase—in this case, on a motorcycle.

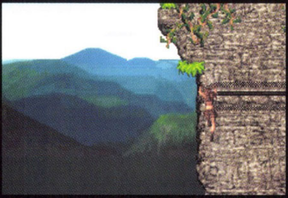
Though we've seen a lot of these elements in other games, Crystal Dynamics does an admirable job of making them their own. Everything feels like it belongs, and serves to strengthen the Tomb Raider experience, not water it down.

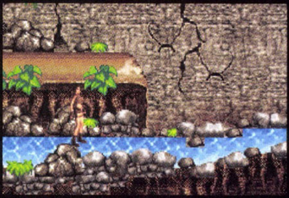
True Beauty

To go along with all that substance is a healthy dose of style. As easy on the eyes as Lara is, it's her surroundings that truly steal the show. Whether it's the cavernous tomb of King Arthur, slivers of light piercing through the cracked ceiling, or the majestic architecture of Croft Manor, every locale is gorgeously crafted. Even more impressive, the puzzles and platforming elements are implemented in a way that looks completely natural; rarely does anything feel artificial or out of place. It heightens the sense of immersion, allowing you to lose yourself in the game's spirit of exploration and discovery. And while you feast your eyes on the remarkable scenery, a sweeping orchestral score provides a similar treat for the ears. All in all, the presentation is as absorbing as the gameplay, and rivals that of any other game this generation (if only Lara's remote support team would shut up once in a while).

Although much of Legend's narrative explores Lara's past, the game is really about resurrecting her future. It's out to prove that the original Tomb Raider wasn't just a fluke; it wasn't merely the right game at the right time on the cusp of the 3-D revolution. There's something truly compelling here, and it's simply taken a fresh approach to realize that again. The legend lives on, and her future has never looked so bright.

scroller. Harkening back to Lara's adventures on the Game Boy Color, it plays a bit like the old Prince of Persia titles that served as a source of inspiration for the initial Tomb Raider series. There's a much greater emphasis on precision platforming than in the other two versions of Legend, and less on environmental puzzles and gunplay. Lara moves with remarkable detail and fluidity (the animation is somewhat reminiscent of the rotoscoped characters from games like Out of this World and Flashback), but it's the controls that make or break games like this. In that regard, it's still too early to tell how Legend will turn out. We'll keep our fingers crossed; good side-scrollers are far too rare these days.

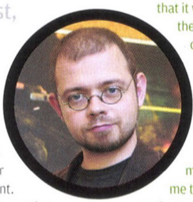




When raiding tombs, it's important to dress appropriately.

THE MAN BEHIND THE LEGEND

We discuss Lara's past, present, and future with her creator, Toby Gard.



Nintendo Power: For Tomb Raider: Legend, you're credited as not only the character designer for Lara, but also as creative consultant. Can you describe what your role as creative consultant entailed?
Toby Gard: It's always pretty difficult to give me a proper title, because I do all sorts of different things. I worked a bit on the story with the story guy. When I first arrived, we kind of rewrote the story together so it was more focused on Lara's past, and more focused on the goals I had for the character moving forward. I did Lara's redesign, and helped the lead character artist on the other character designs, costume designs, and such. I also worked on Lara's animation system. What else? I suppose I was just generally giving feedback on gameplay and game systems to the lead designer. And also, at the end, I directed all of the cut-scenes.

NP: Tell us a bit about the character's origin.
TG: Really, the game came first. The game concept was putting 3-D, Virtua Fighter-style characters into an Ultima Underworld-style dungeony environment. And then, taking that and realizing we wanted some sort of platformy elements that would work for the third-person perspective. It became pretty clear that the environments we could do at the time would all be very large, blocky, and very interior. So with all of that, we thought that an Indiana Jones-inspired theme for the game was very appropriate. Really, the character came after that. We wanted to make a character that was different from Indiana Jones, but also different from all of the other characters that were around at the time. It became clear to me watching people play Virtua Fighter, which was kind of the first big 3-D-character console game, that even though there were only two female characters in the lineup, in almost every game I saw being played, someone was picking one of the two females. And it seemed to me that this was something that people hadn't really caught on to yet. That and the fact that I like drawing and animating female characters—I think they're interesting anyway—that kind of informed the beginnings of making Lara. Then things like that she was an aristocrat and such came later, as I wanted to make a character that was as different as possible from the standard American, square-jawed hero. I thought that an aristocratic female would be really interesting. And then I was just sketching from there, really.

NP: This is the first Tomb Raider game you've worked on since the original. What motivated you to return to the series, and what's it been like to reunite with Lara after all this time?
TG: The main thing that was interesting to me was the fact that it was moving to a new studio. And that the new studio would clearly be starting out with a clean slate and be able to redefine Lara with less baggage than Core would have been able to. Core was obviously very vested in the previous games. I felt that since the character had morphed away from what I had originally intended so much, that this was an opportunity for me to go back, get on board with it, and make sure that when Lara was pointed in this new direction, that it would be consistent with the original concept of the character.

NP: Lara's character model has changed considerably. Can you walk us through that process a bit and talk about what you were trying to accomplish with the new look?

> **"We're still daydreaming about what we'd like to do."**

TG: What struck me when I was looking at the progression of Lara over the years . . . she was very stylized in the first game, in terms of proportion and such. And over the ensuing games, especially up to Angel of Darkness, and also the direction that Crystal Dynamics was taking, was retaining something of the cartoony rendering of the character, but moving proportionately toward reality. So she had this more-real look proportionately, yet there was still this unrealistic, cartoony sort of simplicity to her. And it struck me that it would be much more interesting to do the opposite of that, and actually go back to the more exaggerated proportions but then put massive amounts of detail into things like skin and musculature and the actual structure of the character to make it look real in that regard. But still retain the iconic feel of the character in terms of proportions. That was the goal. It was really an attempt to make her seem much more "next-generation," because it didn't feel like she'd evolved enough.

NP: Tomb Raider: Legend has seemingly revitalized the franchise. Do you think that this was the series' last chance to remain relevant, and how important was it to get a fresh perspective from a new developer?
TG: The fresh perspective has been an incredibly positive thing, because apart from anything else, the developers [at Crystal Dynamics] weren't tired of making Tomb Raider games. They were excited. And I think that excitement and energy that everyone on the team felt about making Legend really shows in the final game. As to whether or not it was the last chance, I think that Lara Croft is an interesting character and a well-liked character. And obviously, that only takes you so far if the games aren't good, and aren't enjoyable, and don't deliver an experience that people are having fun with. So, whether or not it would be the last chance, I don't know, but it was obvious to everybody here that they had to make something that was really, really justified. To make a Lara game deserving of her.

NP: As you mentioned, Legend really recaptures the spirit of the original game. Was that important to you and the team at Crystal Dynamics?
TG: Yeah, it was one of the fundamental goals [Crystal Dynamics] had even before I arrived. They went back and looked at all the previous games, especially the first one because it was the most popular, and tried to get back to the basics. It was pretty much in reaction to Angel of Darkness, where it moved so far away from what Tomb Raider was all about. So that was the main goal—go back to the tombs and make Lara a more realistic character.

NP: What's the status of [your development studio] Confounding Factor? Is the company still a going interest or will you continue working on Tomb Raider?
TG: I'm gonna stick around with Lara. I think we've taken some really great steps with Legend, and I think that there are a lot more interesting stories that we can build around her. I'm very interested to explore more aspects of her personality. Confounding Factor really was closed after I left to come here (to Crystal Dynamics). So I don't have any real plans to pick it up again any time soon.

NP: How do you think Lara's exploits might work on Wii?
TG: To be honest with you, I don't know an awful lot about [Wii]. I haven't got any of the inside scoops yet. [Laughs] It would certainly be interesting to see what we could do with the motion sensor on the controller. And I think that always the strength with Nintendo is their interface, how they always innovate on the interface with the game. But of course, it's something I'm interested in investigating. I'm a huge fan of Nintendo. It's always been sort of a dream of mine to work with Nintendo.

NP: Finally, can you tell us anything about what the future holds in store for Lara?
TG: It's still a bit early. We're still daydreaming about what we'd like to do. [Laughs] Fundamentally, I think Tomb Raider games are about uncovering mysteries, and there are so many mysteries for us to explore. I think there are so many aspects of her personality that we can also look into. It's a bit bewildering, to be honest with you, just finding which ones will make for the most exciting game. Legend was a very special game for this studio, because unlike the Core games, it was built from scratch. Its goals really were to provide that baseline Tomb Raider experience, but with great controls and with great stability. What we have a great opportunity to do in the future is really build on that, really innovate the series so that experience becomes far more. There's a whole world of excitement out there, because the basis of the games is exploration and discovering mysteries. That's such a wide-open space for us.

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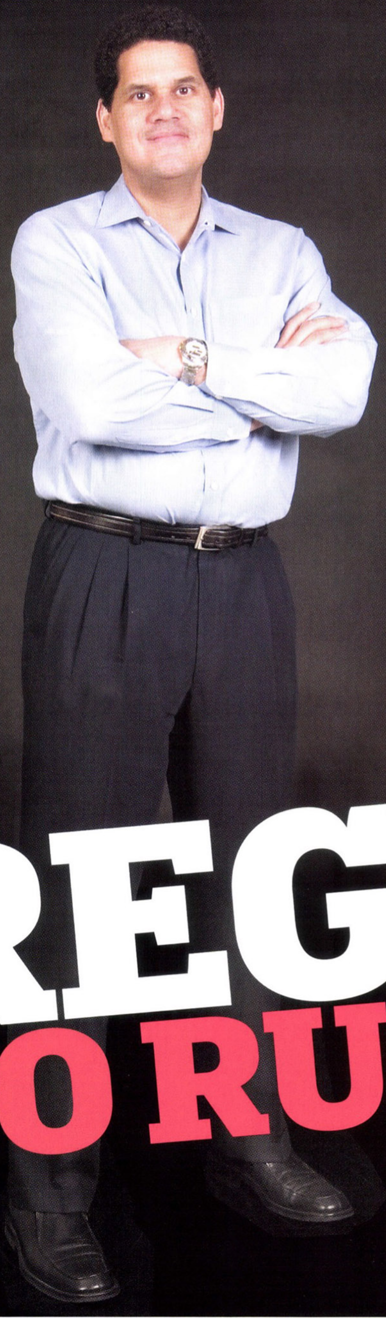


REGGIE TO RUMBLE

As Nintendo prepares for what may be the most important months in the company's history, we sit down for a frank discussion with Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing **Reggie Fils-Aime**.

By Steve Thomason

Photos by Jim Catechi

Nintendo Power: Let's start by getting your assessment of the current state of Nintendo.

Reggie: The current state of Nintendo is very, very good; very, very positive. Nintendo DS has fantastic momentum in the marketplace driven by stellar software. We have sold, at this point, a huge number of Metroid Prime Hunters. Tetris DS is also doing quite well, and is receiving great buzz for Wi-Fi play. The Wi-Fi Connection is a real hit in the marketplace. Plus, we know we have quite a few other initiatives up our sleeve with the launch of Brain Age, as well as DS Lite and New Super Mario Bros. So we're feeling very good about the state of our handheld business. Game Boy Advance also continues to sell very well. The pink GBA is doing well in the market. And certainly, everyone is waiting for Zelda to help drive our GameCube business.

> **"I believe we are well on our way to addressing the key lessons coming out of the GameCube launch."**

NP: You're gearing up for your first home-console launch since joining Nintendo. What's the experience been like, and what have been some of the biggest challenges and some of the most rewarding moments of the last few months?

Reggie: You know, the run-up to E3, with all of the work that's been done with Wii, has been a tremendous learning experience for me, as well as a great opportunity to make a mark in how we launch this system successfully throughout the NOA territories. What have been the greatest challenges? Making sure that the titles that we prepare to launch are all on track, making sure that our licensees have all of the latest information in order to create great games for the system, and making sure that we show this off the best way that we can at E3. Those have really been some of the biggest challenges, and what have taken up all of my time over the last few months.

NP: Lately Nintendo's been talking a lot about how the company wants to appeal to a wider audience that includes casual gamers and even nongamers. Should the Nintendo enthusiast be worried?

Reggie: Absolutely not. We've been very clear in saying that Nintendo needs to be an "and" company, meaning core gamer as well as a new, expanded audience—casual gamers. For the core gamer, we have Metroid Prime Hunters, we have New Super Mario Bros., we have a new DS Zelda title, Phantom Hourglass. Those are all fantastic products that will certainly keep the hardest of the hard-core happy with Nintendo. We've been very clear that innovation needs to be brought back to the gaming industry. That's what's driven our success. And that's why you're seeing titles like Brain Age and Big Brain Academy. Quite frankly, as a gamer, I myself am just as intrigued by those titles. So, should the core fan be worried? Absolutely not. We have all of the great product that will certainly make them happy.

NP: Why do you think the GameCube finished third in the North American home-console race, and what is Nintendo doing to avoid that same fate with Wii?

Reggie: I have looked at the GameCube launch much like a business case study because I wasn't here. I can look at it dispassionately and without a lot of ownership. In my view, we had two key weaknesses in how we launched GameCube. First, the software during the launch window was not diverse and strong enough from a first- and third-party perspective. And second, after the launch window, there was much too long a gap in launching the next round of great software. That's what I look at and say, "How can we do Wii differently?" So during E3 we showed a very broad range of software—both first- and third-party—that will meet gamers needs. From Metroid Prime 3, Mario Galaxy, and Ubisoft's Red Steel, the core gamers will be thrilled. With Tennis and WarioWare, we have titles that will reach the masses. And, based on the sheer range of titles we've shown, we're confident that the entire first year of Wii's launch will be strong. So, I believe we are well on our way to addressing the key lessons coming out of the GameCube launch.

NP: Speaking to that, we've heard from a lot of developers that they're very excited about the creative possibilities with Wii, but what has Nintendo done to entice publishers to commit to the platform?

Reggie: It's tough for me to answer how much more have we done, because I didn't see the baseline of GameCube activity. But what I know is that we have been sharing information and development tools with publishers since very early on in the process. We have communicated to them why it makes sense to develop for the platform, and why it makes business sense to bring their best current franchises and brand-new concepts to the platform. And, to me, the best example of follow-through so far has been Ubisoft and their announced Red Steel title. But quite frankly, there are many more titles and broad-based support from the publishers that were highlighted at E3. Plus, there are many more titles to come. So those have been our key tools and tactics to make sure that publishers are on board with our strategy.

NP: Speaking of new franchises, over the last five years, there have been more than 20 games starring Mario, and more Zelda and Metroid games than we're used to seeing. Are you worried about overexposing those franchises, and will Nintendo rely less on them moving forward and introduce more new franchises?

Reggie: In terms of our core franchises—Mario, Zelda, Metroid—I believe we have done an outstanding job shepherding those franchises and doing new and unique things with each. You focus in on Metroid, and how we've been able to balance the traditional Metroid type of experiences with the brand-new first-person look of the Metroid Prime series. I think that's been fantastic. You look at the broad range of Zelda—everything from the cel-shaded look to the more mature look of Twilight Princess—we've shepherded that franchise in a fantastic way. So first, I would give us an A+ for what we've done with our current franchises. We have also done a fantastic job with new franchises. What do I mean? Nintendogs, a brand-new franchise that on a worldwide basis has now sold over 6 million copies. The Brain Age series, before we even launched it in North America, had already sold over 5 million units. Brand-new IP [intellectual property], brand-new franchises that have a long future for us, a very profitable future for us, which we're quite excited about. We will be launching other new properties with Wii, such as Disaster: Day of Crisis, which we announced at E3. So, are we, Nintendo, focused on growing new forms of IP? Absolutely. But make no mistake; we will also bring our best franchises to bear for the launch of Wii and do that quite successfully.

NP: Will any of those new properties target the older enthusiast gamer? What kind of things can Nintendo do to appeal more to that group?

Reggie: Let me separate out your question beyond pure age. Because I think what you mean is, "What are we doing to appeal to the mature, core gamer, as well as any other type of user expansion strategy?" For the mature, core gamer, are we creating new properties to try to appeal to that consumer group? Yes. Absolutely. But also, we are looking to key licensees to develop games to focus on that audience as well. Because there are certainly licensees out there that do a great job with Mature content, an area where likely Nintendo will never push the envelope the way these other developers and publishers do. Again, Red Steel is a great example of that. In terms of other content, we will continue to create new properties that will bring an older consumer to the Nintendo platforms, but maybe not in an M-rated way. Again, Brain Age and products of that sort are one example. But there are other things we believe we could do, whether it's with the racing genre or the action-adventure genre, that can bring the best of Nintendo's strengths to bear against those types of games.

NP: Some would argue that Nintendo has been a generation behind in adopting certain technologies. With the N64, it was an adherence to cartridges instead of moving to a disc format. With the GCN, it was online play. Could the lack of HD for Wii turn out to be the same kind of Achilles' heel?

Reggie: We don't believe so. HD today has a number of issues. There's no standardized format. There are a number of different ways to bring HD to the marketplace. The penetration of HD televisions is still quite low. We've made the decision for Wii not to have HD as a critical part of our proposition. We believe it's a little too early. We intend to reflect the value of that decision back to the consumer. Other types of technology, frankly, are deeply imbedded into Wii in terms of what we're doing with the controller, how that works for the consumer, and other types of technologies that we believe are critically important. We are quite aggressive in those areas. Do we believe that the decision around HD is correct? Absolutely. And we intend to show that in the marketplace.

NP: If you could have one third-party franchise on Wii that doesn't currently reside on a Nintendo platform, which would it be?

Reggie: You know, that's a tough question because publishers and developers are currently working on a full range of different franchises, and I'm not even clear on all of the work that's being done bringing the best of the existing franchises onto our platform. So my hopeful answer is that there's no franchise that currently exists that won't find its way to the Nintendo platform from a third-party perspective. That all of the great franchises will not only come to Wii, but will play in uniquely better ways on our platform.

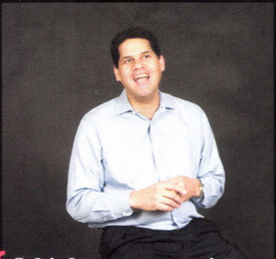
NP: Wii promises to deliver new kinds of gameplay experiences, but some people might not be ready to abandon traditional game styles like Mario 64 and The Wind Waker. What would you say to them? Will we see both types of games on Wii like we have with the DS?

Reggie: I'll answer that in two parts. First, certainly all of the legacy content from NES, SNES, N64—that content will be available via the Virtual Console. The consumer will play those games the way that they're used to playing from a controller capability standpoint. Plus, obviously, all of the GameCube content is directly playable on Wii using your WaveBird or current GameCube controller. So for consumers who want that type of gameplay, that's a huge library right there to participate in. Additionally, we've said that should developers and publishers want to have a more standard gameplay format, that that capability exists with a classic controller "shell" that the core controller for Wii could be paired with. Having said that, we believe the best way to bring a new Wii game to bear is utilizing all of the technology that we've built into the controller. We have challenged our own developers, as well as third-party [developers], to really take that to heart. I think once, as a consumer, you've given the Wii controller a chance, you'll find that it really is a much more immersive way to play and be won over with that experience.

NP: Which Wii game are you personally most excited for and why?

Reggie: I have really enjoyed all my time with Tennis. Using the controller to hit with spin or power is fantastic. I've also enjoyed ExciteTruck, especially how I can use the controller to execute a perfect landing. Lastly, Metroid Prime 3 really has reenergized my passion for that franchise. Which is my favorite? That's like asking which of my three children I love most!

NP: Can you talk a bit about Nintendo's Wi-Fi plans for Wii?



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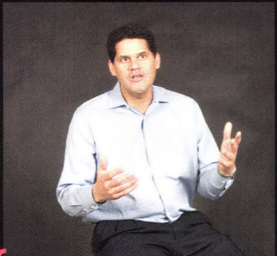
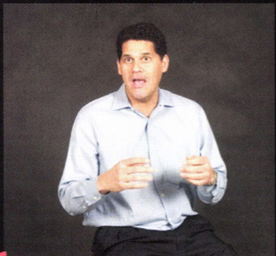


> "... we see the online capability of Wii as a huge, huge asset to our launch. And we will leverage that to the hilt."



> "In the end, it's the creative horsepower of the individual that will drive game development versus a company name or a brand name."

Reggie: At this point, I really can't share new information. We've talked about the Virtual Console, and how that will bring both legacy content, as well as potentially brand-new content to bear for the consumer. There's a lot more information that we will share. What I will say is that we see the online capability of Wii as a huge, huge asset to our launch. And we will leverage that to the hilt.

NP: Does the lack of a hard drive limit the types of things you can do online, such as MMORPGs?
Reggie: I don't think so. We've communicated that a wide range of storable media can be used with Wii. We've announced that SD cards are compatible, we've talked about Ethernet connections. So our plans for Wii really can scale to include all types of gameplay, and that's our focus.

NP: Will we see downloadable demos, trailers, and those types of things?
Reggie: We plan to create an online environment that is dedicated to game content. This may include the ability to own content as well as the opportunity to have it for only short periods of time. All of that is part of our strategy.

NP: Will we see third-party NES, SNES, and N64 titles on the Virtual Console?
Reggie: Third party? We've already announced that you'll see Sega content on Virtual Console. We want that legacy content to be the best, broadest representation of our products from an NES, SNES and N64 generation, as well as all of that great Sega content. Our focus is on breadth, and certainly that would include third-party content.

NP: Speaking of the Sega Genesis content, how did that come about?
Reggie: I don't know all of the details, but I do know that last year, when we announced the Virtual Console concept at E3, conversations started happening right away between interested parties on how the best of Nintendo's franchises could coexist with the best of the Sega franchises. So I suspect that was the genesis of many of the conversations—pun intended!

NP: Are you worried about your competitors adopting the Wii's unique features in some way?
Reggie: I am the type of executive that is constantly thinking about alternatives and "what if" scenarios. And one of the things I've learned about this industry is that smart ideas are often copied by competitors, and copied quite quickly. Whether that was the Rumble Pak that we initially invented or whether it was the multiplayer approach that we've taken. So do I fear competitors stealing the best of our ideas? Absolutely. Are we constantly creating barriers to that? Yes we are. In the end, it's a constant challenge.

NP: Let's talk about the DS a bit. It's clearly dominating in Japan, but things are far more competitive between it and the PSP in North America. Why do you think that is, and how can Nintendo of America replicate the kind of incredible success that the DS enjoys in Japan?
Reggie: You know, it's really interesting. If you look at Japan's success, they had the benefit of Nintendogs, followed by Brain Age, followed by Big Brain Academy, followed by Animal Crossing and Mario Kart over the course of roughly eight months. And that sequence of killer titles really created the huge volume disparity in that marketplace. I believe that we are in the middle of our own eight- to nine-month sequence of killer titles. Looking back to late last year, the launch of Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, Mario Kart, and Animal Crossing certainly gave us fantastic momentum during the holiday time period. We have since followed that up with Metroid Prime Hunters and Tetris. The launch of Brain Age has been strong. That will be followed by Big Brain Academy, and then, in the future, there's obviously New Super Mario Bros. and, of course, DS Lite. That sequence, in our minds, will be critical in driving a much more significant gap in the DS performance versus our competitors. And that's what we're focused on.

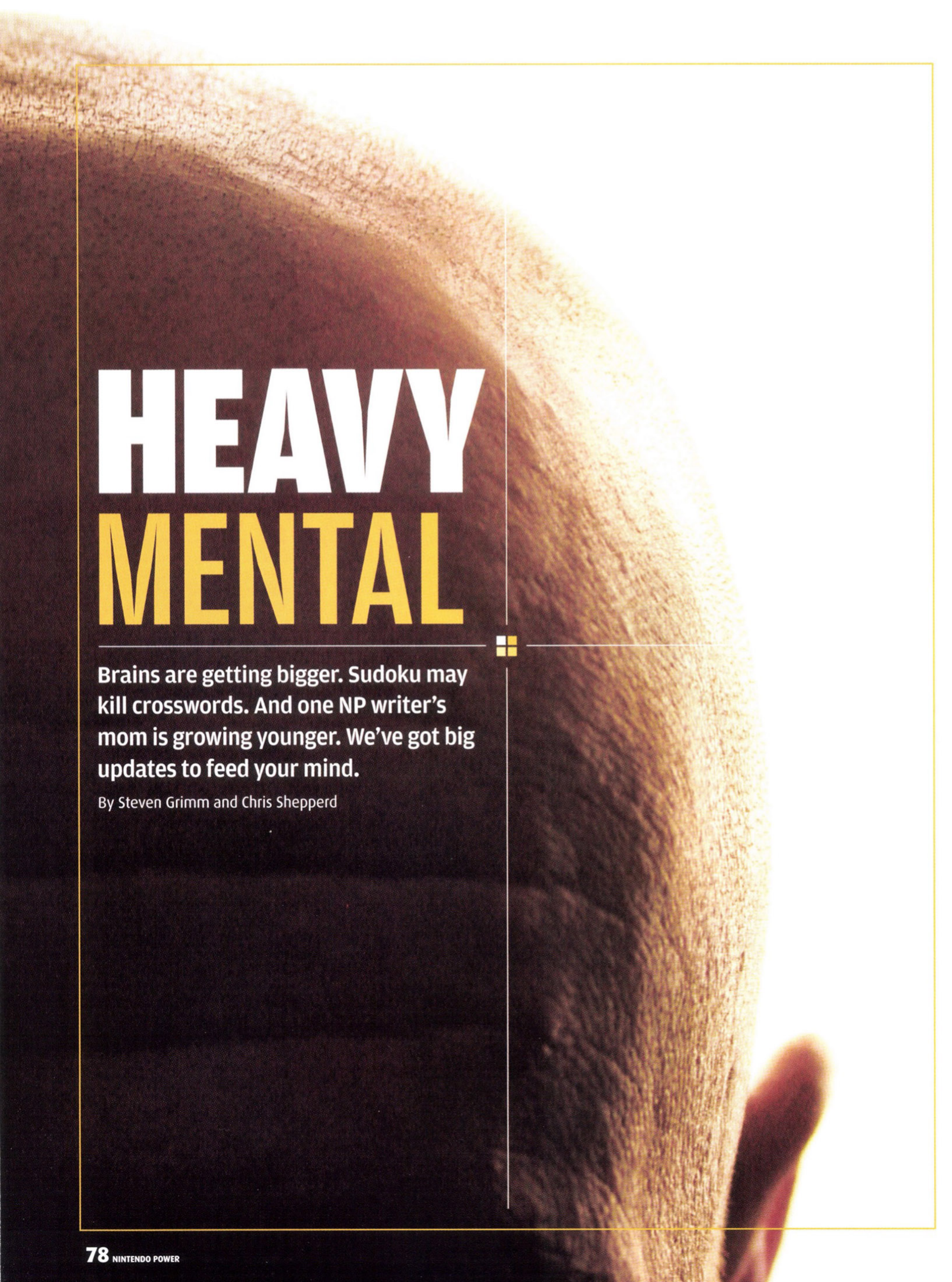
NP: Why do you think that third parties have been a little slower in creating Wi-Fi-compatible games for the DS?
Reggie: You know, that's a great question that only they can answer. I do know that third parties are very well aware of the success that we've had with the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. They see the success that we've had with Mario Kart, Animal Crossing, and Metroid Prime Hunters. My belief is that there certainly is a lot more content being created that's Wi-Fi-enabled for Nintendo DS than as recently as six months ago.

NP: What are the plans for the Game Boy brand? Will we see a new Game Boy in the near future, or is Nintendo focusing on the DS for the time being?
Reggie: Our priority right now is driving DS and launching Wii successfully. Now that's not to misrepresent the importance of the Game Boy brand. It is hugely important to us, and we will continue to support Game Boy well into the future. Is there a new Game Boy in development? That's a question for Mr. Iwata and Mr. Miyamoto. I'm focused on making sure we achieve our objectives here in the North American territories.

NP: Why doesn't Nintendo actively seek to acquire studios like some of your competitors?
Reggie: That's another question that's best answered by Mr. Iwata. I will say this: Our industry is heavily people-intensive. In the end, it's the creative horsepower of the individual that will drive game development versus a company name or a brand name. So for me, I don't know if I would be so focused on acquiring a studio versus encouraging the best and the brightest developers out there to be part of the Nintendo family. Whether that's from a second-party-development standpoint or coming and joining me here at NOA. I think that's a bigger priority versus buying a company where the individuals can turn around and leave after a very short period of time.

NP: Thanks for your time. Any final thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?
Reggie: The only other thing I would amplify for the core Nintendo fan, that gamer who grew up playing Zelda on the NES or SNES, that consumer who remembers fantastic games like Pilotwings or Mario 64, I want you to know that we absolutely have not forgotten you. The new IP and the new games we have for Wii, for Nintendo DS, will excite you the same, if not more, than those games so many years ago. That's critically important. And it really does reinforce that Nintendo is an "and" company, focusing both on you the core gamer, as well as brand-new consumers that we hope to bring into the gaming fold.

Reggie's special edition Wii remote has the power to control your mind.



HEAVY MENTAL

Brains are getting bigger. Sudoku may kill crosswords. And one NP writer's mom is growing younger. We've got big updates to feed your mind.

By Steven Grimm and Chris Shepperd

BIG BRAIN ACADEMY

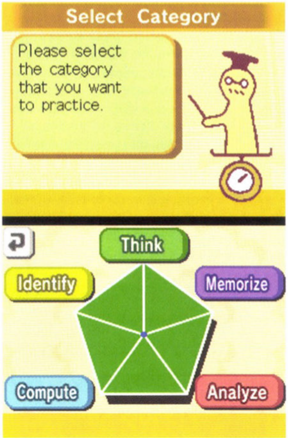
Brain Age isn't the only school in session—how does Big Brain Academy compare?

People who've caught the brain-training bug are now a month into Brain Age, and they'll be the first to ponder how Nintendo's second grey-matter trainer will school 'em when it debuts on June 5. Of course, BA and BBA have a few things in common: Both offer DS downloading and multiplayer action, and BBA is expected to be priced as low as $20 in the US, just like BA.

But the tone and challenges in Big Brain Academy are worlds apart from the earlier title—they're colorful, wacky, and sometimes downright weird, though no less taxing. Some are similar to the challenges in some IQ tests; in CubeGame, for instance, the players must assess how many blocks are in a series of oddly shaped piles. You can count 'em out, but you'll blaze through CubeGame only if push yourself to make mental leaps to calculate the sum faster. Other activities are designed specifically around the DS hardware. For example, Sound Bites is a memorization activity that uses dual screens, sound effects, and touch control.

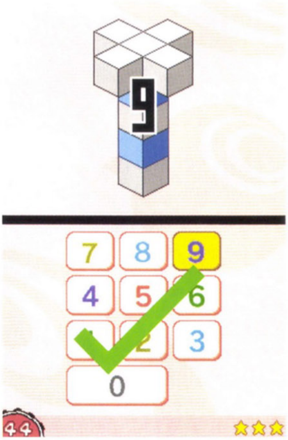
Both of Nintendo's brain trainers are meant to be played only a smidge daily, but their goals are different: Whereas BA aims to reduce your brain age, BBA strives to increase your brain weight. Not really, of course—BBA is all about fun, and supersizing your brain is just the bizarre way that the game tells you that you're doing well. (The Japanese version of the game helps make your brain softer, but "soft brains" sounds like more of an insult than a goal in English!)

While BA players will find BBA a nice change of pace, it's parents who may be the most attracted to the game, enticed by the chance to bond with their kids via a fun learning activity. Given that a recent Entertainment Software Association study indicated that more than a third of parents in America are gamers, BBA may turn out to be a busy academy.

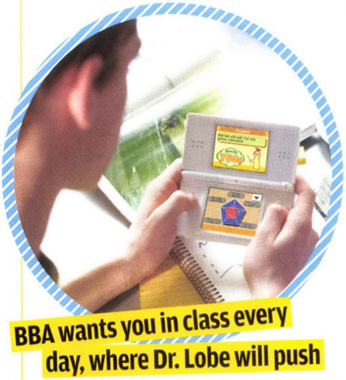


Select Category

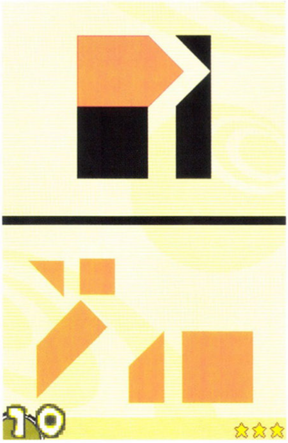
Please select the category that you want to practice.

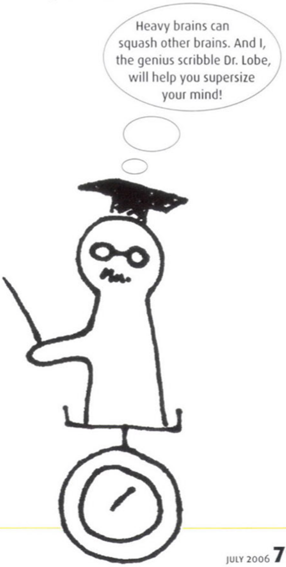


In Big Brain Academy, you'll start off with a clean slate in five categories: Think, Memorize, Analyze, Compute, and Identify. But as you take activity tests, such as CubeGame (above) and Get in Shape (lower left), your unique mental profile will fill out and change over time.



BBA wants you in class every day, where Dr. Lobe will push you in five mental categories.





Heavy brains can squash other brains. And I, the genius scribble Dr. Lobe, will help you supersize your mind!

BRAIN AGE

We conduct a very unscientific experiment with Brain Age on the ideal test subject: my mom, Char.

Hey Mom, try this game out, will ya? Gotta go. I'll call you in a month.

I assume my reaction to learning about Brain Age was very similar to a lot of other people's—my mom would totally dig it. My mom, Charlotte, is the ideal candidate to play Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day. She's never played a video game in her life (although being around me she's definitely heard of Mario and Pokémon) and she retired recently, so she has tons of time on her hands (although she'd probably disagree). When I approached her about trying out the game for a few weeks, I expected her to be skeptical. Her greatest fear about playing the game wasn't that she wouldn't understand what was going on, or that she would do poorly—it's that she really didn't want to look foolish. But she was willing to swallow her pride for a chance to experience something new. And when I asked if she wanted to be our guinea pig for an upcoming article, after some serious hemming and hawing, she agreed to share her Brain Age experience.

Yeah, whatever you say. I'll start playing it right away, I promise . . .

BREAKING TRADITION

It was evident from the start that Char isn't a normal gamer—she told me she wanted to read the instruction manual from cover to cover before even picking up the DS. Needless to say, my jaw dropped. We all know that real gamers don't read the manual except as a last resort. After spending a few minutes finding her glasses, she perused the manual, occasionally reading aloud to reinforce her understanding.

Even after becoming more comfortable with her upcoming odyssey by way of the manual, she wasn't quite ready to jump in. In fact, two more days passed before she would finally start playing. When I wouldn't let her put it off any further, she tentatively picked up the DS. I assured her that I had absolute faith in its construction—it's virtually indestructible under normal circumstances, and she didn't have to be so dang cautious with the thing. She worried a bit when she couldn't insert the game into the DS, but she managed to figure it out. (I find it fascinating that she continues to get the card in backward virtually every time, however.) Soon, she noticed that there was something else stuck in the DS—I had left my copy of Gunstar Super Heroes in the GBA slot. I really should've taken it out before handing her the DS just to avoid such distractions. Once I removed Gunstar, she groped around and found the power button and stylus after another quick consultation with the manual.

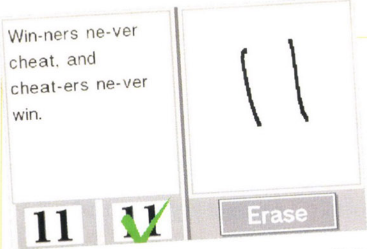
> **"My days vary a lot—I might do well on some game one day and then poorly the next."** —Char

Red!
No wait!!
Blue!
Quit
Red

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Once Mom got the game up and running, things started going much smoother. She had read that what she wanted to select was Daily Training mode (I guess the manual really can come in handy!). The professor's helpful introduction guided her through the game's first steps. I sat there while she dictated virtually everything that was displayed onscreen, but otherwise she didn't look to me much for help. I tried to stay out of the way as much as possible, anyway—I knew that I wouldn't be around for most of her time with Brain Age.

As the professor invited her to take her test to determine her initial brain age, the first signs of doubt began to creep into her voice. She started with the Stroop test, which had her say the color of the displayed word instead of reading the word itself. She didn't do well . . . at all—the microphone had trouble understanding her, even when she was getting the colors right. After a little bit of ribbing from my dad that her Kansas accent was getting in the way, I stepped in to help with her technique. She was holding the DS way too close to her mouth, and when the system didn't understand her right away, she spoke louder and more fervently, only compounding the problem. When she held the DS farther from her face, the issue diminished greatly. Before Mom got to see her results, she had to create her profile. After she input her name and actual age, the professor revealed her brain age. Let's just say she wasn't happy with it. She wanted to start over from scratch, but I convinced her that a mediocre baseline brain age would only make her eventual scores look better. Impressively, she seemed genuinely concerned about her brain age—I was certain after just this brief first session that she was hooked. Before I left, she poked around with the other game modes and promised to give it another shot the next day.



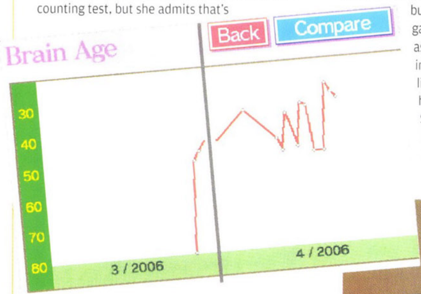
Win-ners ne-ver
cheat, and
cheat-ers ne-ver
win.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

True to her word, Char continued her tests the next day . . . and the day after, and the day after, until it became part of her daily regimen. She started calling me at work every day to update me on her progress. I was caught between being happy that my mom was playing a video game, and being uneasy that she was making me late to at least one meeting a day (but I didn't really want to go to those meetings anyway).

Mom hasn't quite settled into a routine where she does her Brain Age check at a certain time every day, and she thinks it may impact her performance. "I have found that I will usually do better in the morning rather than later when I may be tired," she notes. "I also now do some training always before doing the Brain Check—it kind of gets me in the swing of it." She also has discovered that distraction can cause huge swings in her score, as can the particular games that pop up on her daily Brain Check. "My days vary a lot—I might do well on some game one day and then poorly the next. I find I do need quiet to be able to concentrate."

Naturally, Mom has developed an affinity for certain tests and an aversion to others. She's always been strong at arithmetic, so I knew she'd enjoy the timed math tests. She's also fond of the syllable-counting test, but she admits that's because she feels like she's really good at it. But I was surprised to hear that she liked Head Count, in which you must pay attention to how many people enter and leave a little house. She told me early on how frustrated she got because it went so fast. But now she says, "Head Count drives me crazy, but I like it—I can't even think about doing Hard [mode] at this time, though." She is dreadful at Word Memory, which has you memorize as many words as you can from a list in a short time. Much to her delight, she found that she could press Select to specify which games she'd be tested on—that way she can filter out some of the more maddening games. If it helps her score, I say that's fine; and because it helps her keep her sanity, my dad says it's fine, too.



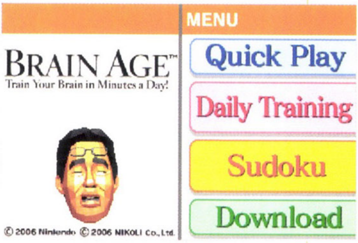
Mom has found the doctor who hosts the game kind of endearing, she tells me. He's been helpful in keeping her involved from day to day. When she turns on the DS and the doc's floating head appears, she dutifully says hello and comments on his glasses, making him laugh. She also appreciates his sense of humor—after one test, he told her that her brain age had jumped to 79 years old, only a day after she had scored a 35. Just before she flew into a rage, "He said he was recomputing my age, and gave me a 34—and he was just hooting it up."

With just the stylus and her voice, Char was able to pick up and play her first ever video game with ease.

> **"... you don't use traditional game-playing to play Brain Age—just the stylus, which is great since that is familiar to all of us."** —Char

GAMER FOR LIFE?

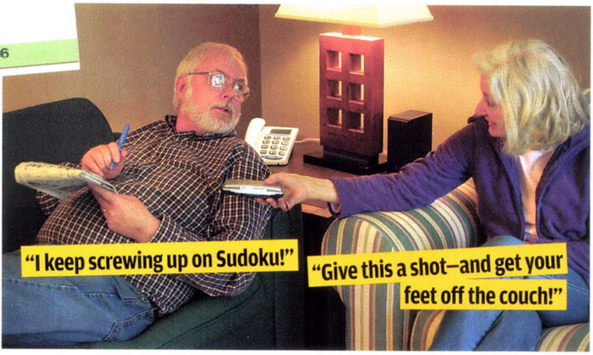
Has Brain Age hooked my mom on video games? Yes and no. She really enjoys the workings of the DS—the touch screen and the microphone are intuitive enough that she's had an easy time getting used to them. "One of its features is that you don't use traditional game-playing to play Brain Age—just the stylus, which is great since that is familiar to all of us." She really looks forward to playing Brain Age every day, but she doesn't see herself playing other games unless they're as simple to play as Brain Age. She's had trouble describing the game to neighbors, so she feels like she'll have to show it to them to help them understand the concept. She's also tried to get my dad to play it, but he's too busy beating Metroid Fusion to bother with another game. Like father, like son, I suppose.



MENU
BRAIN AGE™
Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day!
Quick Play
Daily Training
Sudoku
Download
© 2006 Nintendo © 2006 NIKOLI Co., Ltd.

As part of her daily Brain Age check, mom says hello and "Glasses, Glasses!" to the doctor every day. He seems to appreciate it.

I want to thank my mom for being such a great test subject for Brain Age. She's been an excellent sport—willing to try new things, sticking to it when it got frustrating, and providing honest feedback about her experience. Thanks, Mom!



"I keep screwing up on Sudoku!"
"Give this a shot—and get your feet off the couch!"

SUDOKU GRIDMASTER

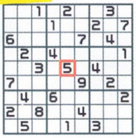
The pencil-and-paper craze ditches both pencil and paper.

It's embarrassing when nongamers know more about a game than you do—even when it's not a video game. When it comes to the number-juggling game sudoku, that's been the case for many of us. I didn't see the signs of craze contagion in 2005, when many newspapers started running the puzzles alongside crosswords, and when sudoku mags bumped the likes of J.K. Rowling and Stephen King from the best-seller racks at bookstores. While I stayed glued to my Nintendo DS, sudoku caught fire behind my back.

It's taken Nintendo going nuts for sudoku in 2006 to put the puzzle phenomenon on my radar. Brain Age included dozens of sudoku puzzles as a fun extra, but I didn't seriously dive into solving one until Sudoku Gridmaster landed on my desk. The DS game's simple tutorial introduced the basics: The puzzle grid is separated into nine three-by-three boxes, and you've got to put the digits one through nine into each box. But each row and column must also hold all nine digits. Zzzzzzt! That's where my brain short-circuited, at least until a fellow NP staffer, who'd been playing sudoku long before it went DS, gave me an essential tip (seen below). Only 10 puzzles later, I'm a sudoku convert. Know this before you get obsessed, however: Easy puzzles take up to 30 minutes to crack; hard ones can take hours. And Sudoku Gridmaster, which hits the street on June 26, will include 400 puzzles that span four difficulty levels—which should translate to several months of sudoku, if you skip the sleeping.

Easy
No.026
Time
00:14:00
Undo
Step
Redo
Save & Exit
Options
Erase Number
START
SELECT

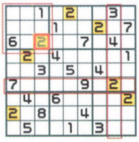
To start with . . .



		1		2			3	
			1			2		7
6					7		4	
	2		4					1
		3		5		4		
7					9		2	
	4		6					2
2		8			4			
	5			1		3		

Kick-Start Your Sudoku

Each puzzle begins with a smattering of digits. You've got to fill in the rest. You might think the scant few starting numbers aren't enough to figure out the rest. But there is enough to fill in a few more, which helps a lot. Look at all of the preplaced 1s. When the puzzle is totally done, as you glance across three horizontal boxes, a 1 will appear in the top line once, the middle line once, and the bottom line once. Same is true for three vertical boxes: a 1 will appear in the left line once, the middle line once, and the right line once. So, at the start of the game, if there are enough 1s already on the field, you can sometimes figure out where a few more 1s must go. Try it out with all nine digits—you'll be surprised the technique will help you tackle sudoku.



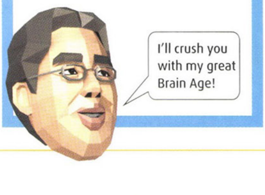
		1		2			3	
			1			2		7
6		2			7		4	
	2		4					1
		3		5		4		
7					9		2	
	4		6					2
2		8			4			
	5			1		3		

. . . and after a scan 2s.

TOUCH GENERATIONS

THE NEXT GEN OF GAMING

Video games = kryptonite? For those of us who grew up gaming, that's a bizarre idea. But if you've ever tried to get your nongaming friends and family members to share in your obsession, you've probably seen them stare at what you're playing like a deer caught in the headlights. That makes sense if you're trying to get your grandma to face the chainsaw dude from RE4. But for some of Nintendo's titles—Brain Age comes to mind—why should nongamers be scared off? Nintendo's solution: Touch Generations. Starting this summer, you'll see the Touch Generations campaign hit stores as a friendly way to introduce non-gamers to some of Nintendo's titles. The Touch Generations library will be filled with stuff you've been playing—Tetris DS, for instance—plus newer titles like Brain Age, Big Brain Academy, Magnetica, and Sudoku Gridmaster. Will the concept really connect with non-gamers? It's been a smash hit in Japan, where Nintendo launched Touch Generations last year with Nintendogs, Brain Age, and Big Brain Academy; millions of brand-new gamers have picked up the DS. Give grandma another chance. She might not throw down for a deathmatch, but she very well could destroy you in Tetris DS.


I'll crush you with my great Brain Age!

THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU GO SOMEWHERE BETTER.

NINTENDO DS
New SUPER MARIO BROS.
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Comic Mischief

Welcome to the new Mushroom Kingdom. Where a special mushroom makes you bigger. A warp pipe takes you somewhere better. And you can play Mario versus Luigi in multiplayer mode. It's an all-new Super Mario Bros.® game. This only happens on Nintendo DS.

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NINTENDO DS™

INSIDE ZELDA

NINTENDO POWER'S MONTHLY CHECK-IN FROM THE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

(Part 14)

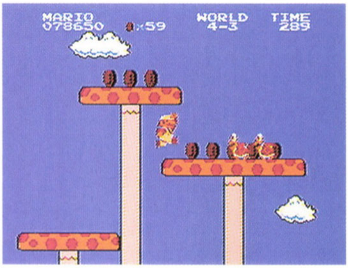
EXPLORING THE DEPTHS

SHINKO TAKESHITA | NINTENDO | KYOTO

If you've traveled the mysterious passages of any of the Zelda series' dungeons, you know the heightened sense of tension you feel as you seek to overcome its dangers and unlock its secrets. One of the people responsible for eliciting those feelings is Shinko Takeshita, who is designing the graphics in Twilight Princess's dungeons. Her industrial-design background combines with her keen attention to detail to breathe realistic life into Hyrule's dankest, darkest locales. In this edition of Inside Zelda, Takeshita speaks about her journey from Zelda fan to Zelda graphic designer, and her approach to ensuring that Twilight Princess lives up to fans' expectations.

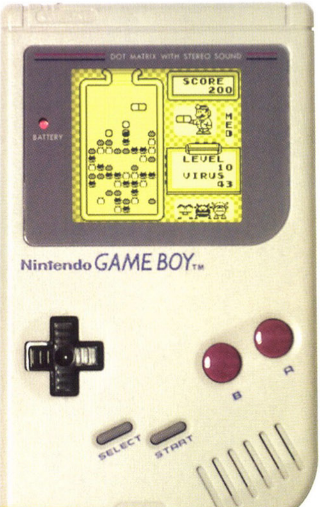
Getting into the Game

I was in junior high back when the Famicom (the Japanese equivalent of the NES) came out. At the time, most people thought of it as a product primarily for boys. My younger brother played the Famicom almost constantly, but he wouldn't even let me touch it! I was just the audience, looking on while he played. But it was still fun to just watch, especially when he played games like Super Mario Bros. and The Goonies. Back then, I never imagined I'd have a career in video game development or that I'd work for Nintendo!



When Takeshita was younger, her brother wouldn't even let her play Famicom games like Super Mario Bros. She showed him—now she helps create Nintendo's games.

It wasn't until several years later that I really got into video games. I'd always liked drawing, ever since I was little, so I majored in industrial design in college. I learned about things like the use of color, lettering, and theories and techniques for creating advertisements, but then everything changed when when one of my friends let me borrow an original Game Boy. Dr. Mario on Game Boy was one of the first games I really enjoyed, and after that I played The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening. It was such an eye-opening experience! Back then I didn't even realize that the Game Boy could be powered by an AC adapter, so I bought batteries in bulk so I could keep playing! Sometimes I would play for hours on end, and I'd forget to even open the curtains in my room. That was my first memorable encounter with a Zelda title, and it was the catalyst that brought me into the world of video games. I went back to my parents' house and dug out all the old games and systems and spent my free time playing all the classics that I'd missed.



Everything changed when one of my friends let me borrow an original Game Boy. It was such an eye-opening experience!

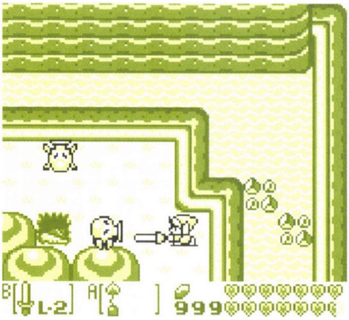
I think Twilight Princess maintains the essence of what makes the Zelda games popular while still having new layers—letting us flex our creative muscle, so to speak.

Back
Y
R
A
X
B
ITEM
00
006

New Dimensions

At many Japanese colleges, when you get close to graduating, the school holds sessions to get you in touch with potential employers, and that's how I found out about a design-job opening at Nintendo. Actually, the submission deadline for the job had already passed, but I made a phone call to Nintendo and asked if they'd still take my application. Fortunately, they agreed to accept it, and they called me in for an interview where I got to show them my work (like advertisements I'd created). Lucky for me, Nintendo gave me the job!

Around the time I started working at Nintendo, 3-D graphics were really getting popular and becoming the industry standard. I took a 3-D graphics training class shortly after I started the job, and the course really helped me understand 3-D graphic techniques. Ironically, the first project I was assigned was creating 2-D graphics for Paper Mario on the Nintendo 64. It was a fun job, but since my peers were all working on 3-D games, I felt a bit left behind. I shouldn't have worried, though; I had the chance to work on many 3-D titles in subsequent assignments. I put my polygonal knowledge to use in Animal Crossing, plus I worked on Super Mario Sunshine and other games.



The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening was Takeshita's first significant experience with the Zelda series. The Game Boy classic demonstrated just how deep video games could be.

Team Hyrule

Twilight Princess is my first full Zelda project. I helped out a little bit on The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker, but other than that, I only watched Zelda development from the outside. Working on the Zelda series always looked challenging, but when I became a member of the Zelda team, I found out it's actually harder than I imagined! Everyone on the staff pays such close attention to detail. I've discovered how important and difficult it is to make players feel like they're actually in the environment. The feeling of interacting with the world, along with good play control, is so important to making a good Zelda game. The development team performed a lot of experiments and spent a lot of time making sure everything lived up to our expectations.

I think Twilight Princess maintains the essence of what makes the Zelda games popular while still having new layers—letting us flex our creative muscle, so to speak. Early in the development process, our team was having a difficult time. Back then, we were obsessed with the belief that we had to invent aspects of the game that were totally new. Our director/producer, Eiji Aonuma, guided us by saying that we'd never be able to move forward if all we were doing was trying to create new elements. He told us to first determine what a traditional Zelda game should be, then take that foundation and add in new facets. That advice got development back on track and helped us relax a bit, so we were ready to face new challenges. The result is that even returning items—items that Zelda fans are already familiar with—will be used differently in Twilight Princess. We hope that by adding new twists to classic elements, we can surprise players and fill them with a sense of wonder.

My job is to take the ideas of the game planner and visually bring the game's dungeons to life. The general information is provided by the planner—things like the type of environment, item

My husband also works for Nintendo; he's a programmer. If we're working on the same game, we end up discussing it over dinner.

locations, and the overall dungeon shape—and then it's up to me to make it look good. I was in charge of the graphics in the dungeon that was shown at E3 2005—the one containing the monkeys and the Gale Boomerang. My industrial design major in college might not sound useful for my current job, but knowing the basics of design has helped me on many occasions, such as when I needed to properly balance the color palette, or when I needed to decide what shapes to use. I think the dungeons of Twilight Princess will be very interesting and provide players with unique challenges. Even though the monkey dungeon was specifically mine, it's not the only one I worked on. I helped out with the graphics in other areas, and other graphic designers helped me with the dungeon I was working on. It's nice when I get the chance to play the outdoor areas. It gets claustrophobic just working in dark, narrow passages all the time! Maintaining the proper balance between gameplay in the field and in the dungeons is an important part of Zelda games.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
TWILIGHT PRINCESS

Takeshita's work on Twilight Princess thrilled showgoers at E3 2005. She was responsible for the graphics featured in the dungeon demo, in which Link used the Gale Boomerang.

Family Matters

My husband also works for Nintendo; he's a programmer. We met while working on the original Animal Crossing and we got married shortly after! He was also in charge of programming on The Wind Waker and he's currently working on The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass for DS. Although it doesn't happen when we're working on different projects, if we're working on the same game, we end up discussing it over dinner. A typical topic of conversation might be, "These images are taking up too much memory! Do you have any ideas?" Or I might say, "I'd like a character to perform a certain action. Can you create a program to do that?" It would probably seem like a pretty strange dinner conversation to an outside observer. When our projects are in critical phases and we have to work long hours, however, we might not even see each other! When my work is relatively light but my husband's project is at its peak of development, I feel like the wife of a sailor: "So long, darling! See you whenever!" I think it's a big plus to our relationship that we know each other's job so well.

When we both have the same day off, we'll often play games together. When we got married, we each had game systems that we brought to our home, so it's like an amusement park! We're especially enjoying the DS these days. Our favorites are Animal Crossing: Wild World and Mario Kart DS.

Of course, I'm so busy with Twilight Princess right now that I can barely think about anything else. If I have a chance, when Zelda is finished, I'd like to develop a game that consists of a lot of minigames. Zelda is a pretty serious, hard-core game, and I think I'm reacting to that by wanting to work on something a little more casual. Right now, though, I'm keeping busy by working extremely hard on Twilight Princess. This game won't betray what fans have come to expect from a Zelda game, and it will exceed their expectations in many ways, too. Please be patient; it'll be worth the wait!

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Portrait of Ruin
A Nintendo DS masterpiece in the making!

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Dark Arts (Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin), Prepare for Contact (Contact), Planet of the Apes (Super Monkey Ball Adventure), Gravity Game (Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam), Framing the Game (I Am 8-Bit), 25 Mama Mia Moments (New Super Mario Bros.), X-ing Over (X-Men: The Official Game), Odama Creator Tells All (Odama), Magic Tricks (LostMagic), Inside Zelda, Cars, LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy, Magnetica, Metal Slug, Monster House, Star Trek: Tactical Assault

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The Bros. Are Back (New Super Mario Bros.), Two Brains Are Better Than One (Brain Age), The Lost World (LostMagic), Improving on Perfection (Tetris DS), The X^3 Factor (X-Men: The Official Game), Impose Your Will (Odama), 2005 Nintendo Power Awards, The Only Game in Town (MLB 2K6), Target: Samus Aran (Metroid Prime Hunters), Inside Zelda, The Good Life (Harvest Moon: Magical Melody). LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy, Big Brain Academy, Over the Hedge, Super Monkey Ball Adventure, 2006 FIFA World Cup, Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

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APRIL 2006, VOLUME 202
Ahead of the Game (Brain Age), 10 Things You've Never Done in Harvest Moon, Inside Zelda, Sizing Up Mario (New Super Mario Bros.), Space Race (Metroid Prime Hunters), Where There's a Drill, There's a Way (Drill Dozer), The Chibi-Robo Guide to Assisted Living, Past, Present, and Future Phantasia (Tales of Phantasia), Break the Silence (Resident Evil: Deadly Silence), Major League Baseball 2K6, Rampage: Total Destruction, Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure, Ice Age 2: The Meltdown, Dr. Sudoku, Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier, Baten Kaitos II

SPECIAL REPORT: METROID PRIME HUNTERS
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GONZO GAMING!
EXTREME
ANIMAL CROSSING MAKEOVERS
SONIC RIDERS DRIVERS WANTED
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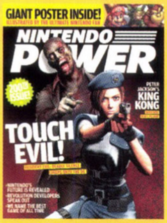
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PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG
TOUCH EVIL!

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Pokémon XD Gale of Darkness

POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

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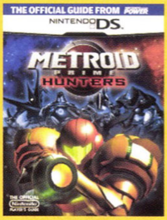
NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.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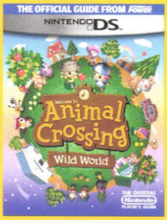
METROID PRIME HUNTERS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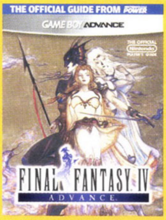
Animal Crossing
Wild World

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD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- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP (GBA)
- MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME (DS)
- MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA (GBA)
- METROID: ZERO MISSION (GBA)
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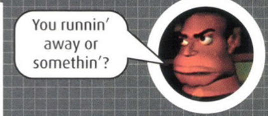
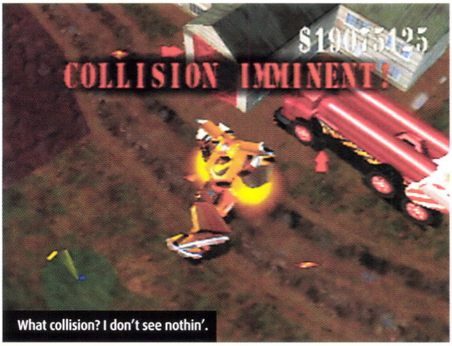
I LOVE THE CORPS


You runnin' away or somethin'?

When it comes to razing stuff, Blast Corps raised the bar.

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 64**
DEVELOPER: **RARE**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
RELEASE DATE: **1997**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **85, 90, 95, 96, 97, 98**
PLANETS SAVED FROM NUCLEAR DISASTER: **6**



What collision? I don't see nothin'.

When Blast Corps debuted in 1997, the software developer Rare was in the middle of a remarkable stretch of hit games—the Killer Instinct and Donkey Kong Country franchises helped define the legacy of the SNES, and GoldenEye, Diddy Kong Racing, and Banjo-Kazooie were also destined for greatness. With so many big-name titles coming out, it might not be terribly surprising that a game that defied the existing genres, didn't have a franchise character, and broke into the 3-D world before such games became commonplace didn't make the same splash as its contemporaries. Nevertheless, Blast Corps managed to draw in a cadre of gamers who were up to the unique challenges.

The premise of Blast Corps was devastatingly simple—destroy everything. A group of demolition experts has been tasked with clearing a path for a damaged truck with a payload of unstable nuclear missiles and a busted navigation system. Using an assortment of construction vehicles, cool cars, and giant robots, you had to demolish everything in the missile carrier's way.

What made gamers addicted to Blast Corps was the deep replay value. In typical Rare fashion, there were plenty of hidden areas to explore and special tasks to perform. After protecting the truck the first time through, you could replay the stage to destroy the remaining structures and pull off medal-earning side missions, or find level-unlocking beacons. Once you finished all the levels and completed all the extra objectives (thus earning gold medals in every level), the game invited you to chase platinum-medal objectives that required absolute perfection.

Although Blast Corps didn't have the characteristic humor that so many Rare games did, it possessed a great style of its own. It's amazing how well the musical themes have held up over nearly 20 years—the tunes are still memorable and fitting to the action on the screen. Additionally, throughout the levels, members of your team popped up in little windows to encourage you either to keep up the good work or to change your current strategy. Catchphrases like, "Time to get moving!" and "You're just trying to impress me!" still stick in my mind as I play newer games that sport destructible environments or interchangeable vehicles.

Blast Corps did have its critics. Many complained that the controls were difficult to get used to, and that the camera was unforgiving. The criticisms weren't without merit—every vehicle in the game required slightly different control, which created a steep learning curve. The camera problems were more forgivable—games like Blast Corps pioneered 3-D and sandbox-style gaming, so they were basically writing the book on good 3-D controls.

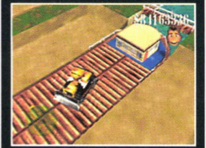
If you ever have the opportunity to pick up this little-known gem, don't hesitate—you may never experience a game like it again. —**CHRIS S.**

WRECK 'N ROLL

CRASH COURSES

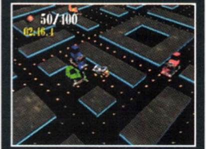
Wanna namedrop with a Blast Corps expert? Bring up these classic levels and watch him drool.

OYSTER HARBOR



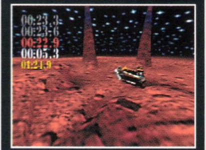
With its tricky TNT boxes and slow barges, fans agree that Oyster Harbor was one of the most fun and difficult stages.

GIBBON'S GATE



Nothing sounds more fun than playing Pac-Man with real dumptrucks. Gibbon's Gate is as close as you'll probably ever get.

MERCURY



Among Blast Corps' hidden levels was the planet Mercury, featuring a low-grav race using a bulldozer called the Ramdozer.

Love is . . . yellow flying robots.

Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?
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REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games

We've saved our biggest review yet for Mario's platforming breakthrough.

+ Major League Baseball 2K6, Over the Hedge, and more.

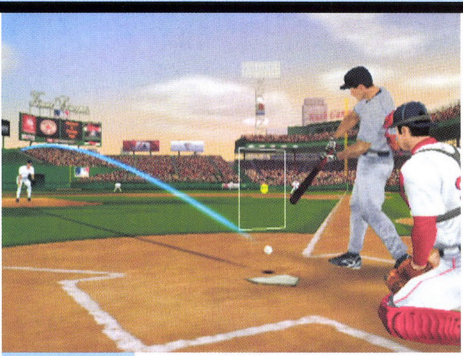
91
Prepare for *The Last Stand* with the game that bridges the gap between X-Men movies.

CHG
PCV
SLD
FB

LEVEL
49
SCORE
97000
MAX CHAIN
6
CHALLENGE
ARNING!
3
CHAIN
+1200

94
Will DS puzzle gamers be attracted to Magnetica?

95
Dinosaurs once ruled the earth. Now they take on the DS in Dino Master.



STREAKY HITTER

BIG HACK

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2K6

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **2K SPORTS**
DEVELOPER: **VISUAL CONCEPTS/KUSH GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

RATING: 7.0

RATING: 6.5

RATING: 6.0

Ever since 2K Sports secured the third-party-exclusive MLB license and announced a GCN installment of the MLB 2K series, the air in the NP office has been thick with anticipation for MLB 2K6. George Sinfield, Steve Thomason, and Andy Myers went around the bases with the ambitious baseball sim.

GS: We knew going in that the game takes an unusual approach to baseball basics, especially pitching and hitting. My question was if the developers were going to pull it off in a way that makes the game easy to pick up and play. The answer is, sadly, no. The pitching mechanic, which has you aim at the pitch's breaking point instead of the strike-zone location, is a clever concept, but weakly executed. I like the fact that it makes you pay attention to the way that a pitch breaks—very in-the-know baseball—but the complex powering-up of every toss turned my first several games into demonstrations of how not to hit the zone.

ST: I agree that it's not terribly intuitive, but I don't mind in a serious sim like this. You get used to the unique interface eventually, and then it works pretty well. I did have trouble adapting to the Swing Stick, but I know you guys liked it quite a bit, and someone like me can always switch to the more-traditional hitting interface. My bigger gripes are with the fielding and baserunning. Both suffer from atrocious AI and a severe lack of fluidity. Far too often, I would tell a base runner to go from second to home, only to watch him pause at third before heading to the plate.

AM: I'm not much of a baseball guy—I didn't even know what a breaking point was before I played this game. But after going a few rounds with the two of you, I found the pitching system to be quite agreeable with my gamer tendencies. It adds a certain amount of pitching challenge that previous baseball games have lacked. What surprises me about MLB 2K6 is its overall lack of polish. You'd think that after making these baseball sims year after year, the developers would have the fundamentals perfected—they don't. The graphics are subpar, the voice-overs are always a couple of seconds behind, the fielding is unresponsive, and baserunning is confusing and glitchy. What the heck!?

GS: I don't think any baseball game has perfected baserunning yet, but MLB 2K6's solutions do seem half-baked. The worst bit is when you anxiously press the L Button repeatedly to make your runners advance, only to realize that you've instructed them to keep running past the next bag. Infield fielding works fairly well, but the outfielders often move as if they're wading in water. Getting back to the Swing Stick: I really like the added play element of pulling back on the stick to prepare for a swing. It keeps your head in the game. Pushing forward to execute a power hit feels natural too. My beef with the Swing Stick is the timing which is unpredictable. On a more positive hitting note, the Hitter's Eye, a semitransparent graphic that lets a player predict the pitch's location, is a great invention. When you know that the ball is coming down the middle of the zone, it makes for an exciting make-or-break moment.

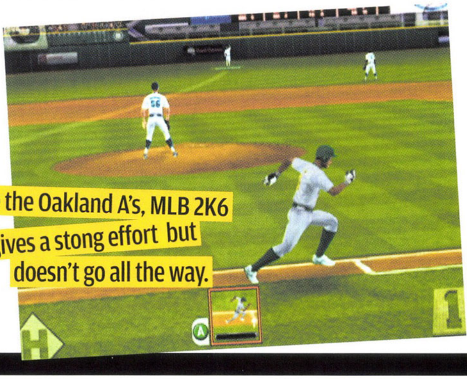
ST: In that same vein, I love all of the authentic scouting information that you can purchase for each player using in-game points. Knowing your opponent's tendencies is such an important part of baseball, and this is the first game that I've seen implement it in any meaningful way. That's probably MLB 2K6's biggest strength—it boasts incredible depth both on and off the field (with play modes ranging from a GM sim to the World Baseball Classic). Unfortunately, Andy's right about the graphics. Some of the player models look like they've been bludgeoned with the ugly stick.

AM: All that hard-core content doesn't add much value for me, though I can understand why baseball nerds like Steve appreciate its presence. That being said, though, it's the subtle nuances in the game that make it fun. Barry Zito's curve ball is difficult to control, but when it's on, it's nearly unhittable—just like in real life (or so I'm told). This attention to detail, paired with the Hitter's Eye and the Swing Stick innovations, really has a way of sucking you in to the game, even if you know little about the sport. On the other hand, the addition of the catcher cam (a function that randomly puts you in first-person mode to throw out a stealing base runner) was a terrible idea. At least you can turn it off in the Options menu.

GS: The game has no shortage of unusual features that you can turn off in the Options menu. Since it does take baseball into so many different directions, it could have benefited from a tutorial. Instead, you're thrown into the deep end from the start. I wouldn't put 2K6 in a league with MVP Baseball, but it'll get you through the season.

ST: It will, but just barely. I appreciate all of the cool new ideas that MLB 2K6 brings to the table, but for everything it does right, there's some little quirk that will drive baseball fans crazy (like hitters who don't run out ground balls). Hopefully the developers can work out the kinks and deliver an all-star performance next year.

AM: Steve's right. There's much room for improvement here. And not just in the small things. Upping the quality of the overall presentation would go a long way toward making MLB 2K6 a better game. It may not be the greatest game ever, but its attention to the intricacies of the sport should satisfy both baseball fans and gamers alike. Plus, it is the only baseball sim scheduled to hit the GCN anytime soon, so we'll have to make do.



Like the Oakland A's, MLB 2K6 gives a stong effort but doesn't go all the way.

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT GAMES FROM THE LAST YEAR DESERVE A BIGGER AUDIENCE?

While we're waiting for the E3-announced titles, we have the summer months to catch up with current releases. We asked our writers about overlooked titles.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

It doesn't seem to matter how much praise we heap on Gunstar Super Heroes—most folks appear perfectly content to let one of the best handheld action games ever pass them by.

STEVEN GRIMM

I was surprised how brilliantly Age of Empires: The Age of Kings translated the RTS series into a turn-based DS game. If you liked Advance Wars for the DS, you really gotta try out AoE: AoK.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

Will everyone *please* go out and buy a copy of Drill Dozer *right now*? It's easily one of the most entertaining games of last year, and nobody even knows.

ANDY MYERS

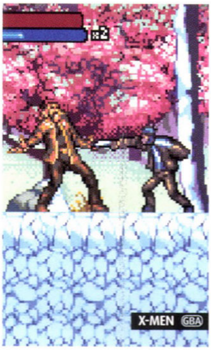
Drill Dozer single-handedly revived my interest in platformers—when I ponder the game's lack of commercial success, I want to crawl under my desk and softly cry myself to sleep.

GEORGE SINFIELD

From concept through execution, Metroid Prime Pinball hit nothing but high notes. The Metroid creatures, the locations, and Samus's Morph Ball form fit the pinball format perfectly.

STEVE THOMASON

OK, I'm gonna make one last plea for Gunstar Super Heroes, then I'll never mention it again. Give it a try, and if you don't like it, I'll personally send you some sort of delicious baked good.



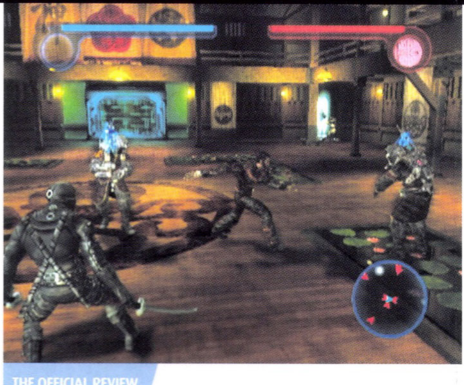
X-MEN: THE OFFICIAL GAME

RATING: 3.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: WAYFORWARD
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

The most important aspect of a side-scrolling action game may very well be the connection between the player and the enemies—that satisfying reaction when your attack drives the enemy back, or the impact you feel when an enemy hits you. That's completely missing in the GBA version of *X-Men: The Official Game*; there's no sense of collision, no sense that you're actually in the X-Men's boots, as you smash and slice through endless supplies of guards, robots, and rabid puppies. Aside from the complete disconnect between the player and the action, the levels are haphazardly designed—mazelike but without any real purpose other than to pave the way for cheap tactics like hitting enemies through walls—and the controls are slow to respond.

Although the ability to switch between four playable X-Men (Wolverine, Colossus, Iceman, and Nightcrawler) at any time is a plus, and each has unique abilities, the developers really could have taken this gameplay aspect further. Unlike the GCN version of *X-Men*, all the characters in the GBA game handle nearly identically, yet at the same time they seem wildly unbalanced. The onslaught of cheap hits you'll take makes Wolverine far and away the most useful character due to his healing factor, and you'll rarely want to change to another mutant except to teleport through a wall or when Wolvie is at death's door. For portable X-Men enjoyment, I highly recommend a comic book instead. —CHRIS H.



THE OFFICIAL REVIEW

THREE'S A CROWD

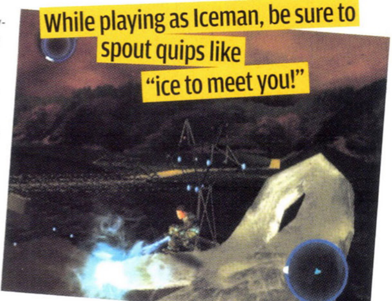
X-MEN: THE OFFICIAL GAME

RATING: 6.5

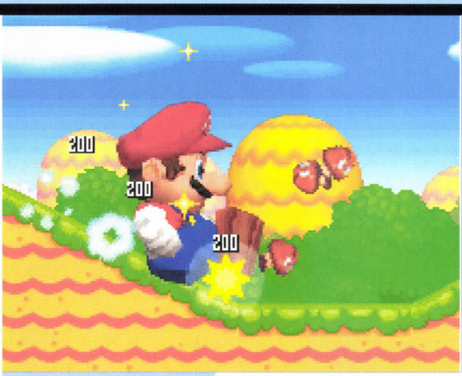
PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: Z-AXIS/HYPNOS
ESRB: TEEN

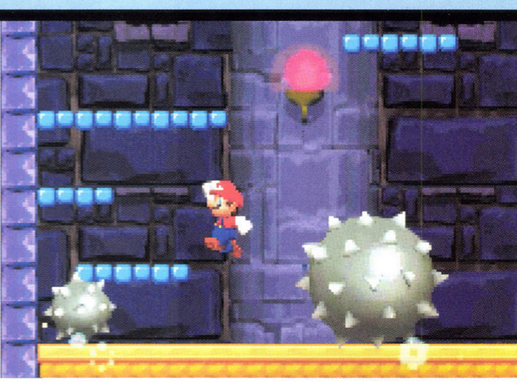
Two-thirds of *X-Men: The Official Game* is pretty good. The Iceman and Nightcrawler stages make creative use of the mutants' powers, and lend most of the adventure a uniquely entertaining feel. Nightcrawler's are the best of the bunch. The former acrobat can use his teleportation ability to sneak up behind foes and zip around the environments with the greatest of ease. It's fluid and surprisingly intuitive, and it looks very cool. The Iceman sections, though not executed quite as well, do a nice job of mixing things up. They essentially play like flying stages; the young X-Man maneuvers on his ice slide as he navigates tight corridors or blasts Sentinels from the sky. Sadly, the third member of our merry band of mutants doesn't fare quite so well. Wolverine's stages consist of slashing through wave after never-ending wave of faceless grunts, offering little in the way of style or technique. They're repetitive, unoriginal, and downright dull. Adding insult to injury, not even Wolverine's mutant healing power sets him apart; both of the other playable characters can mend their wounds in a similar manner.

But the clawed Canuck's lackluster performance isn't the game's only problem. The voice acting is uneven, the cut-scenes look terribly cheap, and the story, cowritten by Zak Penn and Chris Claremont, doesn't come together as well as we'd hoped. Also, it seems like an X-Men game should do more to play up the team aspect. Although AI characters do fight alongside you on occasion, most of the time you're on your own. Still, these issues would be a lot more forgivable if Wolverine's stages were near as much fun as Nightcrawler's or Iceman's. Oh well. Two out of three ain't bad. —STEVE T.



While playing as Iceman, be sure to spout quips like "ice to meet you!"





ONE BIG GAME, FOUR REVIEWS

LARGE WITH EXTRA MUSHROOMS

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Nintendo**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Platform Performer

RATING: 9.5

Though Mario has successfully advanced to 3-D platforming over the last decade, his 2-D titles have always held a special place in gamers' hearts. There's an intangible quality to the side-scrolling Super Mario Bros. games—a mixture of responsive control, expertly laid-out levels, and an inviting art style—that few, if any, copycat titles have been able to duplicate. New Super Mario Bros. manages to take elements from the plumber's recent adventures (3-D models, Wall-Jumps, and triple jumps), add new elements, and apply them to the side-scrolling formula that defines pick-up-and-play gaming. The graphics—a colorful mix of polygonal characters and multilayered backgrounds—and stereo music have never looked and sounded better than they do on the Nintendo DS, but it's the 80 new levels (spread out over eight worlds that sport classic Mario themes) and a collection of new power-ups that make New Super Mario Bros. a perfect addition to the series and the best side-scrolling platformer since Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island. A Koopa shell on Shell Mario's back gives him the ability to slide into enemies and break blocks with lateral motion. A Mini Mushroom shrinks the hero to insectlike size, and a Mega Mushroom allows him to lord over the landscape. Mario's tiny and giant versions are particularly creative additions to the hero's transformation repertoire. The miniature Mario fits into extrathin pipes, leaps in a large, floating arc, and runs over the surface of water. The giant Mario version (about three-quarters the height of the screen) knocks enemies and obstacles aside with Godzilla-esque power and earns 1-Ups for destroying his surroundings. It's particularly satisfying to kick the level-ending flag, making it spin out of view. All three transformations help the beloved protagonist reach his goals, and the Koopa and mini versions allow access to alternate level exits that open branching paths on the world map.

Mario has incentive to open every level (including two multilevel offshoot worlds) because each one contains three Star Coins, which the hero can use to access additional levels and Toad houses, which contain items. Though the houses that hold Mega Mushrooms are well-worth the five-coin admission, the ones that keep standard items and 1-Ups are unneeded, since you can return to any completed level at any time to collect power-ups and extra lives with relative ease. Nevertheless, the collection of Star Coins and the promise of hidden paths and other secrets give the game incredible replayability, and let you play any way you want: tear through the worlds at record pace or take your time and seek every secret.

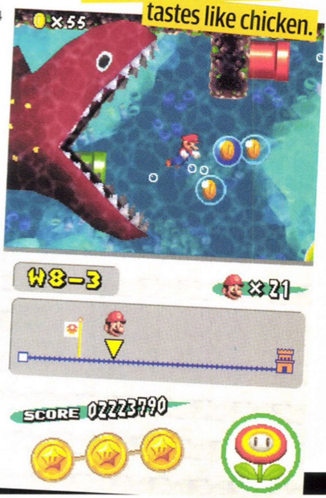
The game makes generous use of the lower screen's touch capabilities, letting you trigger a reserve power-up, warp with one touch to any open world, or play touch-controlled minigames (some new, some holdovers from Mario 64 DS). The lower screen also displays maps that detail your progress through the levels and worlds, and the action transfers to the lower screen when Mario enters underground passages. Additionally, the game offers four-player minigame competitions and two-player battles for stars in special wraparound levels.

It's been 10 years since the last side-scrolling Mario title, but the extras, depth, and polish of New Super Mario Bros. make it well worth the wait. —**George S.**

New and Improved?

RATING: 9.5

When I heard that New Super Mario Bros. was all about getting back to the spirit of the '85 game, I was stunned—but after playing New SMB, I get what's up. With DS tech and 21 years of SMB dreaming, Nintendo cooks up a far trippier game than the original recipe. New SMB goes hog-wild with mushroom platforming, giving us, for instance, bucking-bronco 'shrooms, exploding-airbag 'shrooms, and elevator-action 'shrooms. And while the game has new power-ups, it doesn't resort to Tanooki trickery


He's a hero, but Mario tastes like chicken.

W1-3
SCORE 02359500
Touch!
W6-A
SCORE 02256200

(no offense to SMB3). Instead, it celebrates what made Mario so fun to begin with: hopping across platforms like a daredevil. And smashing or pounding stuff by jumping. It all feels crazy again, due to outlandish level designs. More importantly, it also makes the whole physical circus of a Mario side-scroller *funny* again. In World 2-6, for example, Mario surfs across the sky on a floating platform, working his limited plank space to avoid fly-by obstacles. (Been there, done that, right?) But then it becomes laughably tricky when two Piranha Plants hitchhike on his plank (cutting his walkable space in half), then hilariously hard when y'all float through a plant-infested pipe zone (demanding quick moves), and are-you-kiddingly difficult when a gigantor Piranha Plant pops its head into the ozone to jaw at you. The nutty stuff is nonstop. Though there's a lot more that makes the game great, it's how New SMB elaborates on a simple, funny, nostalgic concept that makes me love it so much. Playing it is like coming home after two decades and finding out that your mom's invited the Cirque du Soleil troop over to use your bedroom as a training room. So comfortable, yet wonderfully mad. —**STEVEN G.**

Truly Super

RATING: 9.5

Super Mario Bros. on the NES is the game that turned me into a diehard game fan, and that same sense of wondrous fun carries over into New Super Mario Bros. almost perfectly. Like in the original SMB, fantastic character control and superb level design (boasting genius obstacle and enemy placement) prove that Mario is the undisputed platforming king, and the sheer amount of variety ensures that the action never gets old. While the tried-and-true gameplay makes New SMB a joy to pick up, it's the wealth of secrets and optional objectives that make it nearly impossible to put down. Few things in gaming are as satisfying as discovering an invisible 1-Up Mushroom, releasing a secret vine, or finding an alternate route that leads to a Star Coin; reaping all the hidden rewards can become a happy obsession.

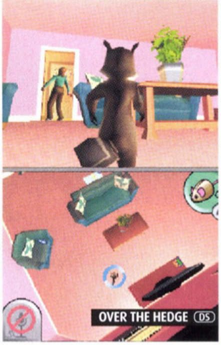
As appealing as New SMB's new worlds, enemies, challenges, and abilities are, I also appreciate the back-to-basics approach to the action. By positioning the Fire Flower as the most useful power-up, the developers have kept the experience focused and pure. The downside to this is that the new power-ups, like the Mini Mushroom and blue Koopa shell, don't get a lot of screen time and are instead relegated to a few useful instances. Fortunately, my only other quibble about the game is that the music isn't quite up to the standards set by previous Mario platformers.

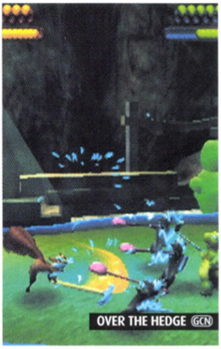
In addition to the incredible single-player game, New SMB's two-player versus mode is thoroughly worthwhile. The fast, frenetic, star-collecting action is riotous fun, with back-and-forth bouts in which the advantage can change in an instant. Of course, more than five multiplayer stages and more-varied obstacles in each would have been nice, but this is still the most competitive fun I've had yet on DS. Even though New SMB isn't able to unseat Super Mario World as my all-time favorite Mario game, it finishes a strong second and provides a fantastic experience that represents video gaming at its finest. —**CHRIS H.**

It's About Time!

RATING: 9.5

Playing New Super Mario Bros. made me feel like I was nine years old again. Producer Takashi Tezuka and his team have struck the perfect balance, capturing the simple essence of the original NES game while introducing just enough new stuff to keep things fresh for those of us who grew up with the plumber. The game isn't terribly difficult if you're simply trying to get from start to finish, but every stage is jam-packed with secrets, and collecting all of the Star Coins presents a formidable challenge to even the most skilled platforming veterans. It sounds clichéd, but this truly is a game for everyone. It also proves that you don't need cutting-edge graphics (though the visuals are certainly appealing) or new-fangled control schemes to create something special. Classic gameplay can still be a heck of a lot of fun, especially when it's polished to perfection. Like Chris, I'm not crazy about the music, and I think the bosses are a bit too simplistic, but that's just picking nits. New Super Mario Bros. is required playing. Buy it, love it, and pray to the platforming gods that we don't have to wait another 10 years for Mario's next side-scrolling masterpiece. —**STEVE T.**


OVER THE HEDGE (DS)


OVER THE HEDGE (GCN)

OVER THE HEDGE

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **VICARIOUS VISIONS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

There's been no shortage of video games based on movies, but there has been an all-out drought of good ones. Surprisingly, Over the Hedge for DS rises above the movie-game masses. Vicarious Visions has raised the bar for movie-based games on the DS by including nice-looking 3-D environments, decent play control, and cut-scenes straight from the movie. The game's objectives revolve mostly around sneaking in to people's houses and collecting items. Each of the playable characters has some fun abilities—Verne the turtle can take cover in his shell, and RJ the raccoon can pick locks, for instance. Over the Hedge also has its funny moments, such as trying to sneak by a blaring stereo with Hammy, who keeps getting distracted and wanting to dance. But for all its nice production qualities, Over the Hedge feels more like a shell of a game than an actual game. There's just not much to do, and what activities there are become incredibly tedious after a short time. Still, it's better than most movie-based games, and fans of the film are sure to appreciate the effort. —ANDY M.

OVER THE HEDGE

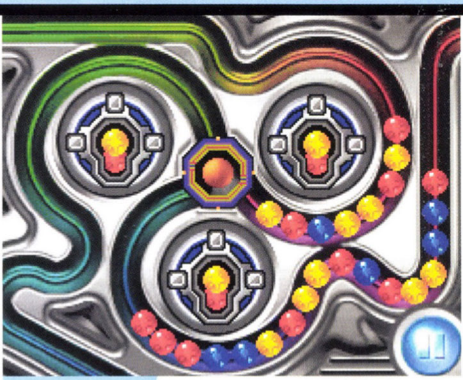
RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **EDGE OF REALITY**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

A cute little raccoon. An innocent-looking turtle. A fuzzy, cuddly squirrel. At first glance, it's easy to think that Over the Hedge is another happy-go-lucky, me-too, critter-themed platformer, but that's definitely not the case. Although the game has its share of jumping challenges, Over the Hedge is primarily about one thing: beating stuff into oblivion. Whether you're obliterating lawn furniture, birdhouses, and fountains in someone's backyard or pummeling the bejeezus out of armies of mind-controlled rats, moles, gophers, and other assorted vermin at a miniature golf course, it all amounts to a whole lot of button-mashing excitement that's not quite the norm for a movie-based game.

The oft-crazed action is enjoyable for a while, but it's too bad there isn't a whole lot more to the gameplay than that. Even though each of the four playable characters has melee attacks, projectile attacks, and special moves, there isn't much depth to the constant combat, and despite the occasional timed food-snagging task or grappling-hook sequence, it doesn't take long for the repetitive nature of the game to sink in.

On the plus side, a second player can drop in or out of the action at any time—games of this nature are almost always more fun with a buddy—and the production values are top-notch. Both the in-game graphics and the CG cut-scenes look excellent, and the writing is genuinely funny. Over the Hedge also features a ton of unlockable bonuses to promote replay, including three minigames (albeit with, ahem, squirrelly controls). Even though cavorting with wildlife isn't generally recommended, in this case it makes for some moderately decent fun. —CHRIS H.



FOLLOW THE LEADER

TRACK STAR

MAGNETICA

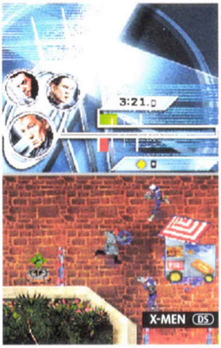
RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **MITCHELL**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Having spent far too much time at the local arcade during my late teens, I used to watch the Bust-a-Move masters in awe as they launched colored balls around the screen with frightening finesse—they are to the '90s what DDR connoisseurs are to this decade. But the thing that always bugged me about Bust-a-Move was controlling the bubble launcher. It worked fine, but I wondered why the arcade cabinet didn't have some sort of wheel-like device rather than the standard joystick. But puzzle games are rarely distinguished by their control schemes.

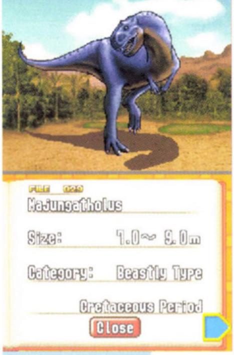
Magnetica, however, is all about control. Like Bust-a-Move, you're required to launch balls and match them in threes by color. But the pacing is much more frantic. Balls follow a path, and you can fling additional orbs from a specified launch point by using the stylus. Furthermore, balls of the same color have a magnetic attraction to each other. What's surprising about Magnetica is how smooth and intuitive it controls. There's very little awkwardness—just flick the stylus in a direction, and the ball goes where you command it. That coupled with an unlimited number of spheres at your disposal allows for a number of different play styles. You can play frantically, flinging balls left and right hoping for a match; or you can play methodically, setting up combos many moves in advance. Some stages have multiple paths and launch points, as well as bonus targets, special balls, and many more surprises. But no matter how chaotic Magnetica gets, the underlying system holds up. The game's only fault is that once you reach a certain level of difficulty, it starts throwing hard-to-predict obstacles in your way. If you play methodically like me, you'll often be thwarted in late levels by a deflecting wall or some other object that appears as you're about to execute a fatty combo. But moments like these are few and far between.

Call me crazy, but Magnetica is my favorite puzzle game to hit the DS yet. It stands out in its genre (it even surpasses its arcade predecessor, called Puzz Loop). It's built around stylus control, which is done quite well. It's intuitive, challenging, and well-balanced. It's addictive, with plenty of options and modes to keep you busy for a long time. And best of all, it is pure fun. If you're looking for a break from Tetris DS or just a good challenge, Magnetica is it. —ANDY M.



X-MEN DS

OVER THE HEDGE GBA



FILE 029
Majungatholus
Size: 7.0~ 9.0m
Category: Beastly Type
Cretaceous Period
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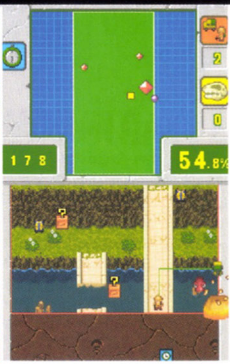


X-MEN: THE OFFICIAL GAME

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: AMAZE
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Magneto fans will be attracted to the DS version of Activision's "backstory" game that leads into the new X-Men movie, since the Master of Magnetism is a playable character only on the DS. And players have never been put in better control of Magneto's powers. While outrunning foes using the Control Pad, you'll throw metal trifles around by stabbing them with your stylus then slashing a line toward a target. And by jabbing the man himself, you'll activate his X-Factor power, which enables you to hurl gigantic metal objects for a short time. Arguably, it's the most inspired Magneto we've ever seen in a game. You'll also similarly use touch- and button control to play as three X-Men, swapping a single character in and out of active duty on the fly: Wolverine (brutal fisticuffs and healing), Iceman (single ice projectiles and triple shots), and Nightcrawler (more fisticuffs and teleportation). Switching heroes quickly is important to master, since Wolvie's made for clearing out crowds, Iceman's great for blasting flyers, and Magneto's awesome for turning explosive mines against the enemy. Nightcrawler, however, never lives up to his reputation on the field, since his teleportation serves merely as a way to stop time temporarily. You'll have to master quick tag-teaming by midgame, because different types of foes flood in at a pace that'll challenge the most hard-core of gamers.

While the basic concept is fun, what drags down the game is the serious repetition in the missions. And unfortunately, anyone playing the game for the film's backstory will be even more bothered, since the game's plot (set amid rising human-versus-mutant tensions) is more tidbits than substance. —STEVEN G.

OVER THE HEDGE

RATING: 3.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS
ESRB: EVERYONE

The only thing worse than a game that's only four levels long is a game that repeats its four levels umpteen times each. Unfortunately, the GBA version of Over the Hedge does just that. You play as one of the characters from the upcoming DreamWorks animated movie, dodging pedestrians, guard dogs, and roughhousing kids as you collect food around your neighborhood. Every mission introduces a new story element, but the same four stages get recycled over and over again. And there are several levels that you have to play multiple times before you can advance. There are a few variations tossed in toward the end of the game that are kind of fun—it would have been nice to see those more evenly spaced throughout the levels. Even for the younger set, this game offers little in the way of challenge—you can purchase health upgrades if necessary, but if they're necessary, you've got other problems to deal with. You can buy other stuff, too, but most of it does literally nothing within the game. —CHRIS S.

REALLY OLD SCHOOL

BARE BONES

DINO MASTER

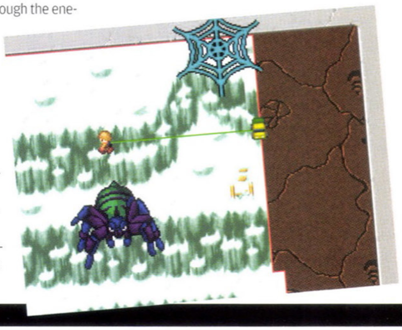
RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: CREATE OFFICE
ESRB: EVERYONE

Combining dinosaur battles with Pokémon-style collection seems like a slam dunk, and Majesco's Dino Master makes a good attempt at delivering that mix at a stripped-down level, but ultimately it falls short. You start by hunting for fossils in an activity that recalls old-school arcade game Qix. While enemy creatures bounce around a rectangular playing field, you guide an archaeologist through the field via touch control to claim territory. If a fossil or special item is in a section that you've claimed, you'll earn the prize. Character control is hesitant, but not to the point of frustration. And, though the enemies aren't as interesting as the vector-born being that slips between the lines in Qix, it's a nice tip of the hat to a forgotten game. You use your fossils to cultivate creatures, then take your creations into turn-based battles: sparring sessions in the single-player game and one-on-one two-player multicard battles.

Fighting is turn-based and very simple. You select an area to attack on your opponent's dinosaur and an area to defend on your own dinosaur, while your opponent does the same. If you're attacking an undefended area, you'll score a hit; and each bite causes the same amount of HP damage whether you hit the target's head, body, or tail. Large dinosaurs start with more HP than small ones, but they also have more exposed attack areas, making it more likely that you'll draw blood. Special techniques cause extra damage or protect more than one area, but using them damages your dino. In the end, the outcome of a battle seems to be more luck than skill.

Though you can unearth 100 true-to-life dinosaurs in 35 fossil fields, the lack of a campaign mode or fighting-tournament structure makes prospects for long-term play grim. Only real dinosaur enthusiasts will stick around to collect 'em all. —GEORGE S.



[ARCHIVE]

A YEAR IN GAMING

This month's Archive entries complete a full year of reviews cataloged since NP's redesign and the introduction of our 10-point rating system. The past 12 months have seen the emergence of the DS as not only a platform for highly rated games in established series, such as Mario Kart DS (9.0), but also new properties, such as Trauma Center (9.0) and Nintendogs (8.5, 8.0), that take advantage of the handheld's unique features. We hope that in another year we'll be saying the same things about Wii.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

NINTENDO GAMECUBE				
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
American Chopper 2: Full Throttle	5.0	Activision	201	T
Batman Begins	6.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Battalion Wars	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	2.5	Activision	200	T
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	6.5	Activision	198	T
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	7.5	Activision	200	T
Chaos Field	6.0	O~3	200	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2.5	Global Star	195≠	E
Chibi-Robo	8.0	Nintendo	201	E10+
Chicken Little	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	5.5	Buena Vista	199	T
Crash Tag Team Racing	7.0	Vivendi	198	E10+
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	7.5	Nintendo	198	E
Digimon World 4	7.0	Bandai	193	E
Dora the Explorer: Journey to the Purple Planet	N/A	Global Star	198	EC
Fantastic Four	6.0	Activision	194	T
FIFA Soccer 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
FIFA Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	9.5	Nintendo	197	T
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	5.5	Konami	197	E
From Russia with Love	7.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
Geist	5.0	Nintendo	196	M
Gun	8.0, 8.5	Activision	199	M
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	7.5	Natsume	195	E
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody	9.0,9.5	Natsume	203	E
Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue	5.0	Namco	196	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	5.0	Vivendi	203	E10+
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	8.5	Vivendi	196	T
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	7.5	THQ	198	E10+
International Golf and Tennis	3.0	Ignition	193	E
Kao the Kangaroo: Round 2	2.5	Atari	203	E
Karaoke Revolution Party	8.0	Konami	199	E10+
Kids Next Door: Operation V.I.D.E.O.G.A.M.E.	N/A	Global Star	198	E10+
Killer 7	8.5	Capcom	193	M
Knights of the Temple	5.0	Aspyr	194	M
Lego *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	198	E
Madagascar	6.0	Activision	194	E10+
Madden NFL 06	9.0, 8.0	Electronic Arts	195	E
Mario Party 7	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Mario Superstar Baseball	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Mark Davis: Pro Bass Challenge	5.0	Natsume	198	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	7.0	Electronic Arts	197	T
Medal of Honor: European Assault	8.0	Electronic Arts	194	T
Mega Man X Collection	8.5	Capcom	200	E
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	6.5	Midway	197	E
Namco 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja	7.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	T
NBA Live 06	5.5	Electronic Arts	198	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
NHL 06	8.5	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Odama	8.5	Nintendo	203	E10+
One Piece: Grand Battle	6.5	Bandai	197	T
Pac-Man World 3	7.0	Namco	199	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	9.0	Ubisoft	200	T
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	8.5	Nintendo	197	E
Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones	9.0	Ubisoft	200	M
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	204	E10+
Scooby-Doo!: Unmasked	7.5	THQ	197	E
Shadow the Hedgehog	8.0	Sega	199	E10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	T
Sonic Gems Collection	8.5	Sega	195	E
Sonic Riders	8.0	Sega	203	E
Spartan: Total Warrior	8.5	Sega	197	M
SSX On Tour	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Super Mario Strikers	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	8.5	THQ	197	E
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	204	E10+
Teenage Mutant Ninja turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	4.0	Konami	199	E10+
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	9.0	Activision	198	T
True Crime: New York City	8.0	Activision	199	M
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
Ultimate Spider-Man	9.0	Activision	198	T
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	6.5	Capcom	199	T
World Series of Poker	4.5	Activision	198	E10+
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	8.0	THQ	197	T
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	7.5	Activision	198	T
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles	6.0	Bandai	198	T
NINTENDO DS				
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.0	Electronic Arts	204	E
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	9.5	Nintendo	196	E
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	8.0	Majesco	201	E10+
• Animal Crossing: Wild World	9.5, 8.5	Nintendo	199	E
Battles of Prince of Persia	6.5	Ubisoft	200	E10+
Blades of Thunder 2	4.5	Summitsoft	201	E10+
Bomberman	7.0	Ubisoft	194	E
Burnout Legends	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Bust-a-Move DS	7.5	Majesco	200	E
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	9.0	Konami	197	T
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	7.0	Buena Vista	199	E10+
Dig Dug Digging Strike	7.0	Namco	198	E
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors 2	5.0	Atari	199	E10+
Dragon Booster	6.0	Konami	200	E
Electroplankton	8.5	Nintendo	200	E
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
FIFA Soccer 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
FIFA Street 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Finding Nemo: Escape to the Big Blue	5.0	THQ	202	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin's Great Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
Golden Nugget Casino DS	6.5	Majesco	201	T
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	6.0	Electronic Arts	195	T
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	201	E10+
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	7.0	Majesco	204	T
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	Vivendi	203	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	5.5	THQ	199	E10+
Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E
Kirby: Canvas Curse	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Lost in Blue	8.0	Konami	197	E10+
• LostMagic	8.0, 7.0	Ubisoft	204	E
Lunar: Dragon Song	7.0	Ubisoft	197	E10+
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
• Mario Kart DS	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	5.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team DS	7.0	Capcom	198	E
Meteos	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
• Metroid Prime Hunters	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	203	T
Metroid Prime Pinball	9.5	Nintendo	198	E
Mini RC Rally	N/A	Summitsoft	204	E
Monopoly/Boggle/Battleship	7.0	Atari	200	E
Nanostray	8.0	Majesco	195	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	6.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Nintendogs	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	196	E
Pac-Man World 3	3.0	Namco	200	E
Pac 'N Roll	7.5	Namco	196	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	3.5	Ubisoft	200	T
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	8.0	Capcom	197	T
Pokémon Trozei	8.5	Nintendo	202	E
Puyo Pop Fever	6.0	Atlus	193	E
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	7.0	Namco	198	E10+
Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	8.5	Capcom	202	M
The Rub Rabbits!	8.0	Sega	201	T

REVIEWER NOTES

HARVEST MOON: MAGICAL MELODY

I've never been a Harvest Moon fan, but after hearing my colleagues rave about Magical Melody, I had to give it a go. Though the relaxed (some might call it boring) gameplay didn't quite make me a die-hard country boy, there's so much to do that I was consistently compelled to come back for more. The game would have benefited from better in-game tutorials and a more detailed visual style, however. —Chris H.

>RAMPAGE: TOTAL DESTRUCTION

The controls for Midway's Rampage update aren't as smooth as those of The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction, but this arcade throwback has a goofy, hell-bent-on-making-a-mess charm that makes it well worth the value price.

—George S.

>FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE

I heard what people were saying about the GBA Final Fantasy IV Advance being harder than the SNES version (when it was called Final Fantasy II), but I took it with a pretty heavy grain of salt. Whoops. My SP has been on the verge of being implanted into a nearby sheet of drywall on several occasions already. Regardless, FFIV is just about as entertaining as an RPG can get. And it only whets my appetite more for the upcoming releases of the rest of the early FF games. —Chris S.

>MVP BASEBALL 2005

The unspectacular showing from MLB 2K6 inspired me to go back and play last year's MVP. If you don't mind the outdated rosters, it's still the best pro baseball game available. What I wouldn't give for a 2006 version (damn those exclusive licensing deals!).

—Steve T.

SBK: Snowboard Kids	7.5	Atlus	199	E
Sega Casino	6.0	Sega	199	T
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	5.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Sonic Rush	9.0	Sega	199	E
Space Invaders Revolution	4.0	Mastiff	196	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	3.5	THQ	198	E
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	6.5	Vivendi	198	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	8.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Super Black Bass Fishing	4.5	Majesco	204	E
Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll	6.5, 7.5	Sega	201	E
Super Princess Peach	7.5	Nintendo	202	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	7.5	THQ	197	E
Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop	5.0	Bandai	201	E
Tao's Adventure: Curse of the Demon Seal	6.0	Konami	203	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	6.0	Konami	198	E
• Tetris DS	9.5	Nintendo	203	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker DS	5.0	Majesco	198	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker Pack	N/A	Summitsoft	200	E
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown	6.0	Ubisoft	197	M
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	194	T
• Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	8.0	Activision	199	E
Top Gun	4.0	Mastiff	202	E10+
Top Spin 2	6.0	2K Games	200	E
Trace Memory	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	9.0	Atlus	198	T
True Swing Golf	8.0	Nintendo	201	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.5	Activision	198	E10+
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	7.0	Capcom	198	T
Whac-A-Mole	N/A	Activision Value	197	E
Worms: Open Warfare	7.0	THQ	202	E10+
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	8.0	Konami	196	E
Zoo Tycoon DS	7.5	THQ	197	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
Atomic Betty	N/A	Namco	198	E
ATV Quad Frenzy	N/A	Majesco	199	E
Backyard Baseball 2007	3.5	Atari	204	E
Backyard Football 2006	N/A	Atari	197	E
Backyard Skateboarding	N/A	Atari	198	E
Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus	N/A	Vivendi	197	E
Batman Begins	5.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	N/A	Namco	197	E
The Bible Game	N/A	Crave	197	E
Big Mutha Truckers	N/A	Destination	199	E10+
Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	N/A	THQ	198	E
Board Game Classics	N/A	Destination	197	E
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabbage Patch Kids: The Patch Puppy Rescue	N/A	D3PA	204	E
Candy Land/Chutes & Ladders/Memory	N/A	Destination	200	E
Care Bears: Care Quest	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance/Aria of Sorrow Double Pack	9.0	Konami	202	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	204	E
Centipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	3.5	Global Star	195	E
Chicken Little	N/A	Buena Vista	198	E
Chicken Shoot	N/A	Destination	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Connect Four Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	N/A	THQ	197	E
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	5.5	Capcom	194	E
DK: King of Swing	8.0	Nintendo	197	E
Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Donkey Kong Country 3	8.0	Nintendo	198	E
Dr. Mario & Puzzle League	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Dr. Sudoku	6.0	Mastiff	203	E
Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure	7.0	Atari	203	E10+
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	5.5	Atari	196	E10+
Drill Dozer	9.0	Nintendo	201	E
Driv3r	5.5	Atari	198	T
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	5.5	Atari	198	E
Dynasty Warriors Advance	7.0	Nintendo	196	E10+
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
everGirl	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Clash with the Anti-World	N/A	THQ	199	E
Fantastic Four	6.5	Activision	194	E10+
FIFA Soccer 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
Final Fantasy IV Advance	9.0	Nintendo	200	E10+
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	9.0, 9.5	Nintendo	193	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin the Turtle	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC

>SONIC RIDERS

Getting a handle on the unique play mechanics of Sonic Riders will take time, and will be accompanied by many a frustrating moment. But aside from F-Zero, you won't find a more challenging racing experience on GCN.

—Andy M.

METROID PRIME HUNTERS

The most successful FPS for the DS so far expands the Metroid universe to include a slate of six new bounty hunters, all with unique alt-forms and affinity weapons. Though it's plenty of fun to fight against the hunters in the single-player adventure, the game hits hyperdrive when it lets you play as the hunter of your choice in co-op and competitive multiplayer matches. It's just what Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection was waiting for.

—George S.

>TETRIS DS

My skepticism was going full bore when I first laid hands on Tetris DS, but the experience has done quite a bit to allay my doubts. The modes are hit-and-miss, but the 10-player local wireless action is 100% worthwhile.

—Chris S.

ODAMA

Developer Yoot Saito's Odama, like his Seaman, not only spits on gaming convention; it burns down the whole establishment. And so it goes into my personal Top 20, which is full of games that challenged not only my skillz, but also my ideas. Odama is half pinball, half voice-controlled RTS, and 100% groundbreaking, so it ranks way up there with my fave GCN games like Pikmin, Donkey Kong Jungle Beat, and Killer 7. —Steven G.

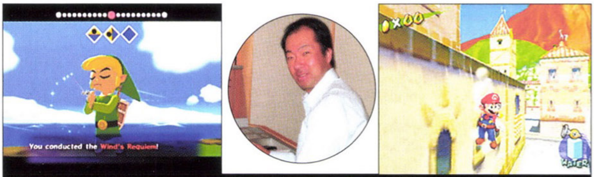
The Game of Life/Yahtzee/Payday	N/A	Destination	200	E
Garfield and His Nine Lives	5.0	American Game Factory	204	E
Garfield: The Search for Pooky	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Gauntlet Compilation	6.5	Destination	197	E
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	200	E10+
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	5.0	Namco	196	E
Gunstar Super Heroes	9.5	Sega	198	E10+
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	8.5	Natsume	195	E
Hello Kitty: Happy Party Pals	N/A	THQ	199	E
Herbie: Fully Loaded	5.5	Disney Interactive	194	E
Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: Kaznapped!	6.5	D3	199	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	Vivendi	203	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	N/A	THQ	199	E
James Pond Codename Robocod	4.0	Valcon Games	195	E
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	5.0	Orbital Media	196	E
Kim Possible III: Team Possible	6.5	Disney Interactive	195	E
KLAX Compilation	4.0	Destination	197	E
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Kong: King of Atlantis	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Kong: The 8th Wonder of the World	6.0	Ubisoft	200	E10+
The Land Before Time: Into the Mysterious Beyond	N/A	American Game Factory	201	E
Let's Ride! Dreamer	N/A	THQ	203	E
Lizzie McGuire 3	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madagascar: Operation Penguin	N/A	Activision	199	E
Madden NFL 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Majesco's Sports Pack	N/A	Majesco	201	E10+
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel & Team Protoman	6.5	Capcom	194	E
Mega Man Zero 4	8.5	Capcom	198	E
Millipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Mr. Driller 2	5.0	Namco	193	E
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	5.5	Namco	197	E
Naruto: Ninja Council	4.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	E10+
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	6.5	Buena Vista	198	E10+
One Piece	8.0	Bandai	197	E10+
Operation/Mouse Trap/Simon	N/A	Destination	200	E
Pac-Man Pinball Advance	7.0	Namco	193	E
Pac-Man World 2	6.0	Destination	197	E
Paperboy Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Paws & Claws Resort	N/A	THQ	203	E
Pocket Dogs	N/A	0~3	200	E
Pong Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Popeye: Rush for Spinach	5.0	Namco	193	E
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	4.0	THQ	196	E10+
The Proud Family	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Rec Room Challenge	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Risk Compilation	7.0	Destination	197	E
Riviera: The Promised Land	6.5	Atlus	194	T
Scrabble Blast	7.5	Destination	193	E
Scrabble Jr. Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	6.5	Konami	196	E10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
Sigma Star Saga	8.5	Namco	195	E10+
The Sims 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Sky Dancers	N/A	Crave	199	E
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Spy Hunter Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	5.5	Destination	201	T
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	7.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Sudoku Fever	4.0	Global Star	202	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	4.0	THQ	197	E
Tales of Phantasia	8.5	Nintendo	202	E10+
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	198	E10+
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Advance	3.5	Crave	193	E
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	6.0	Activision	199	E
Top Spin 2	N/A	2K Games	200	E
Totally Spies!	5.5	Atari	201	E
The Tower SP	7.0	Sega	203	E
Tringo	N/A	Crave	200	E
Trollz: Hair Affair	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Ultimate Arcade Games	N/A	Telegames	198	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
WarioWare: Twisted!	8.5	Nintendo	193	E
The Wild	N/A	Buena Vista	204	E
W.I.T.C.H.	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
Yoshi Topsy-Turvy	7.0	Nintendo	194	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Duel Academy	6.0	Konami	201	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! Ultimate Masters—World Championship Tournament 2006	6.0	Konami	204	E
Zatch Bell!: Electric Arena	N/A	Bandai	198	E10+
Zooo	4.5	Ignition	196	E

COMMUNITY

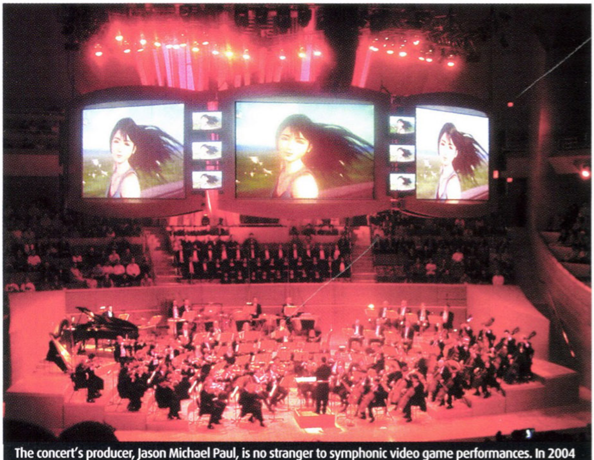
MUSIC

Classic Games, Classical Music

It's time to dust off the tuxedos—Mario and friends are once again going high society. At Play! A Video Game Symphony orchestras from around the world will perform special arrangements of famous video game music. The touring show's highlights include themes from franchises like The Legend of Zelda, Super Mario Bros., Final Fantasy, and World of Warcraft, as well as many others. The tour kicks off on May 27 at Chicago's Rosemont Theater, where famed Nintendo composer Koji Kondo will be on hand to celebrate the inaugural performance. For more news regarding the show, including a show schedule and ticket information, check out www.play-symphony.com. —Chris S.



From The Legend of Zelda to Super Mario Bros., few composers have created more memorable video game tunes than Koji Kondo. He'll be among the renouned composers at the tour-opening concert in Chicago.



The concert's producer, Jason Michael Paul, is no stranger to symphonic video game performances. In 2004 and 2005, he put on a series of shows featuring the music from the Final Fantasy series.

MUSIC

Mega Metalheads

Flying the finger horns and listening to NES music are two activities that have not gone hand-in-hand. But Year 200X, a cover band that rocks classic NES tunes in metal form, plans to change that. Though the group's name derives from the Mega Man series, these guys cover songs from all over the NES map. "It is interesting that people seem to be yearning for the nostalgia of hearing their favorite NES games, and really getting into it when we play," says guitarist Tim Lydon about the band's live show. "Plus, it's pretty interesting to see people moshing in a circle pit to Bad Dudes." For more info on Year 200X and a full interview, check out www.nintendopower.com/year200x. —Andy M.

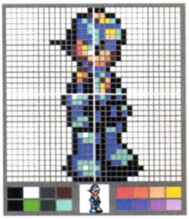
NINTENDO IS AWESOME!

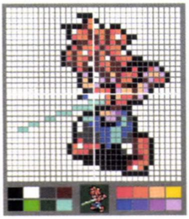
It's hard to look tough wearing a rainbow-colored "Nintendo is Awesome" T-shirt, but the guitar player (Tim) somehow pulls it off. We're not so sure about the bass player (Kyle) with the Zapper, however.

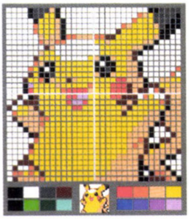
WI-FI

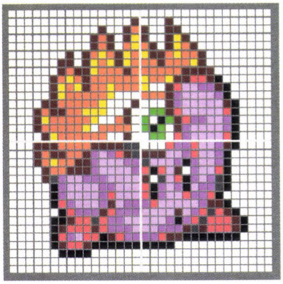
Phil's Kart Art

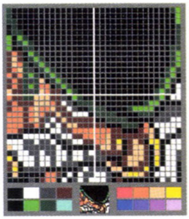
NP Reader Phil (known as turpinator when playing over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection) makes a hobby of creating custom icons for Mario Kart DS and sharing them with others over the Web. Phil's icons are the best we've seen yet—we thought we'd feature a handful of them for you to re-create and use for yourself. —ANDY M..

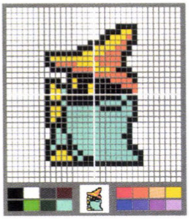

Mega Man.exe (from the Battle Network series)

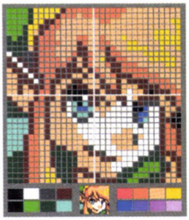

Crono (from Chrono Trigger)


Pikachu


Fire Kirby


Zolo (from One Piece)

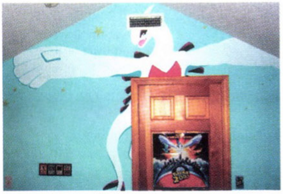

Black Mage (from Final Fantasy)

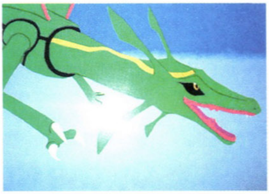

Link

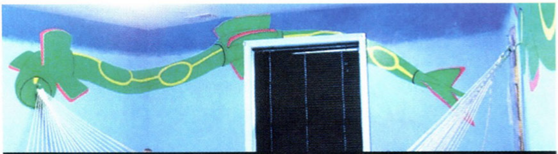
ART

Pokémon Paradise

There are Pokémon fans, and then there are fans like NP readers Robyn and Steph. When Steph was planning on remodeling her bedroom, her friend Robyn suggested painting a Pokémon mural. They began by outlining their design in chalk. In a week, the two had painted an awesome skyline featuring the legendary Rayquaza, with the Pokémon's tail holding up Steph's hammock. Robyn added several giant Lugia to Robyn's room shortly afterward all by herself. —CHRIS S.





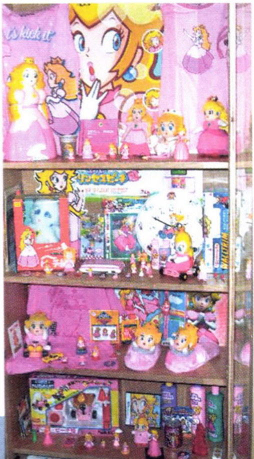


Robyn and Steph began to work on Rayquaza before the movie *Pokémon: Destiny Deoxys* was released, so references were sparse. The final work was surprisingly accurate nonetheless.

COLLECTING

Peach Pit

Last month we featured the Princess Peach stylings of cosplayer Allison H., as well as her comprehensive website, www.peach-paradise.com. This month, we thought we'd show you her Princess Peach-themed collection, complete with slippers, wallpaper, and shampoo. Now that's dedication! —ANDY M.

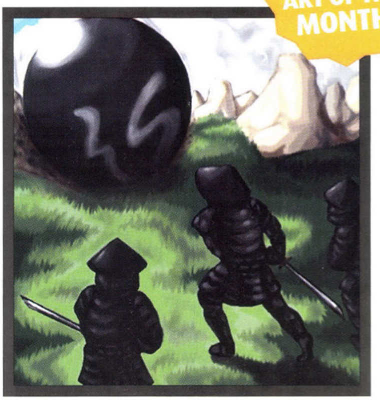


ONLINE

Pinball Pinups

What do you get when you cross a stone sphere, samurai warriors, and giant flippers? Our art of the month has the answer. Odama's crazy fusion of game genres provided plenty of inspiration, but the artistic ability is all yours.

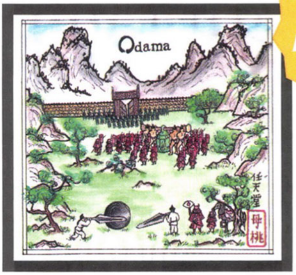
APRIL'S COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST: VEGA101

SUBJECT: ODAMA

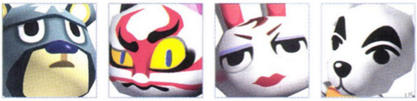
APRIL'S HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST: MAMA_PEACH

SUBJECT: ODAMA

Custom-Made Avatars By Jimmy Catechi



Looking to submit art for the first time, and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

NSider Reviews

Every month, the quality of reviews the NSiders submit only gets better. Keep up the great work.

NSider Review of the Month

Sonic Riders

reviewed by CAPTAINPARATROOPA

Move Over, Mario Kart DS; there's a new racing game in town—Sonic Riders.

One of the first things I noticed were the similarities between this game and F-Zero GX. Both games are held in futuristic worlds, the races take place at high speeds, and some of the missions present you with similar tasks.

In addition to the thrill of soaring at high speeds, I love hearing the broadcaster announce the events that are taking place. She is an important aspect of the game and builds suspense with lines such as, "Who will break out of the pack first?" while the countdown is taking place. I can't help but think, "It's gonna be me!" In addition, the soundtrack is more than you might expect from your standard racing game. I've developed an affinity for the Metal City theme—I frequently race on that track just to hear the music.

I should mention now that if you detest racing games and/or have little patience, Sonic Riders may not be for you. The controls can be extremely frustrating at first, but remember—practice makes perfect. Once you get the hang of things, it should be as easy as riding a bike—you can't forget.

All in all, Sonic Riders should be a satisfying title for many gamers. When in doubt, try it before you buy it. Otherwise, get out there and blow the competition away with some huge air.

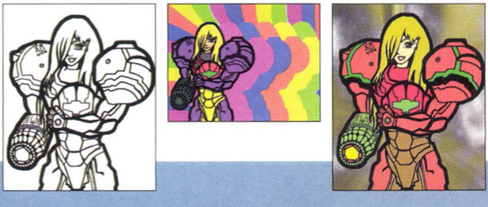
Let your voice be heard!

If you'd like to submit a review for NP, first become an Nsider at Nintendo.com. Then, head to the Reviews forum and submit your game critique. Reviews are selected based on overall writing quality, objectivity, and game knowledge.

GOT THAT SPECIAL SOMETHING THAT BELONGS IN THE COMMUNITY SECTION? SEND US A LINE AT COMMUNITY@NINTENDOPOWER.COM.

By the Numbers

While checking out the fan art on the nintendo.com forums, we came across a really cool thread—the NSider Coloring Book. People post black-and-white line art, then other readers color it in and post their own brilliant adaptations. It's the perfect way for the less artistically adept to get involved in fan art. Way cool.

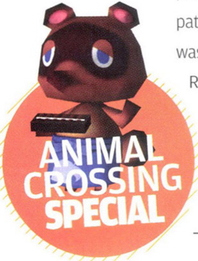


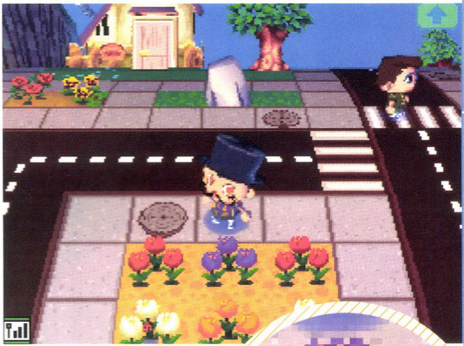
ANIMAL CROSSING

Civilize Your Wild World

On our continuing quest to transform towns in Animal Crossing: Wild World (see our Water World feature in volume 201), we decided to add some culture to ours by reshaping it into a suburban wonderland full of roads, sidewalks, lawns, parking lots, and other features. Every pattern in the screenshot to the right was created using color palette 14/16. Re-creating all of them will take up only 28 of your 32 pattern slots, so don't stop with our suggestions—take the concept further and create your own suburban home.

—Andy M.





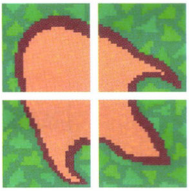
Floral Foray

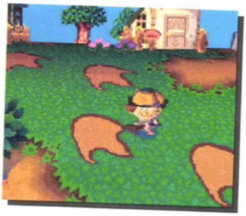
There's no better way to beautify teh 'burbs then with without a few concrete flower beds. You can add some variety to your town's flowers by learning the art of cross-pollination. Simply plant flowers of the same type next to each other—rare new flowers may sprout up nearby. Use your creations to decorate your town, or sell them to Tom Nook for big bucks.

Add Some Spice to Suburban Life

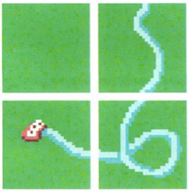
Is life in the 'burbs getting a bit monotonous? Stir up the townfolk with some scary monster footprints! Or just keep it real with a well-manicured lawn complete with a garden hose and sprinkler. (Each of these patterns was created using color palette 12/16.)

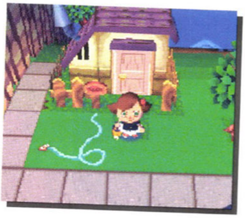
MONSTER PRINTS

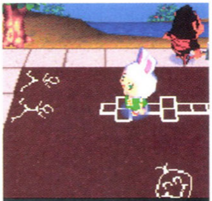




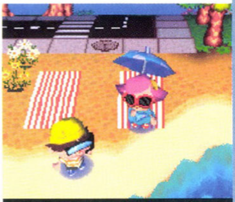
LAWN CARE



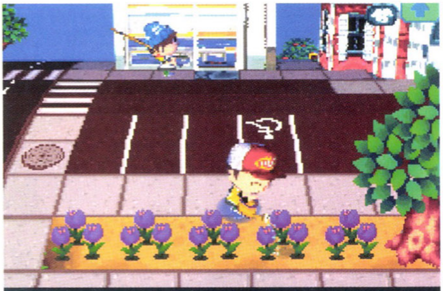




No suburb is complete without blacktop and hopscotch.



Save a pattern for your towels so you can look good at the beach.



What better to do in the suburbs than hang out in an empty parking lot? Create one using the blacktop pattern with crosswalks and parking lines.

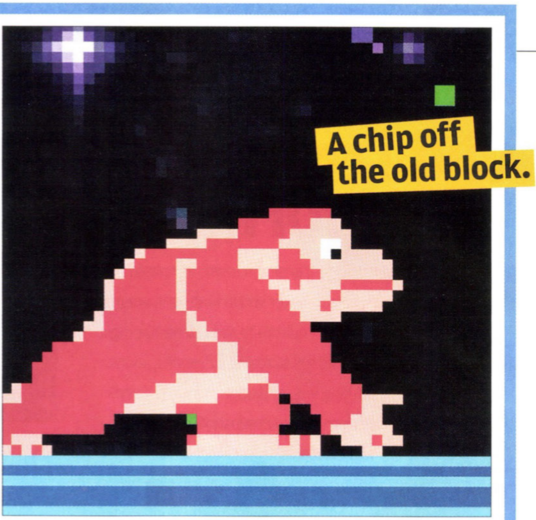
POWER QUIZ

THE NAME GAME

What's in a name? Apparently a lot, considering the wide range of reactions to the announcement that the system code-named Revolution is officially renamed Wii. To celebrate the name change, we're offering a crash course in video game names. Visit **nintendopower.com/quiz** for the answers today, or wait for your next issue.

1 What was the name of Nintendo's first home console in Japan?
a. Nintendo Entertainment System
b. Famicom
c. Hanafuda
d. Super-New Nintendo

2 What does the 6 represent in Super Scope 6?
a. The six AA batteries needed to operate the device
b. The six-inch grip on the gun
c. The six games on the bundled cartridge


A chip off the old block.

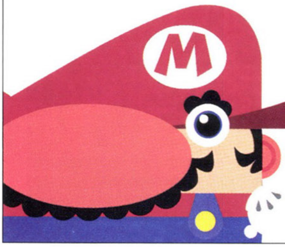
PIXEL-PERFECT

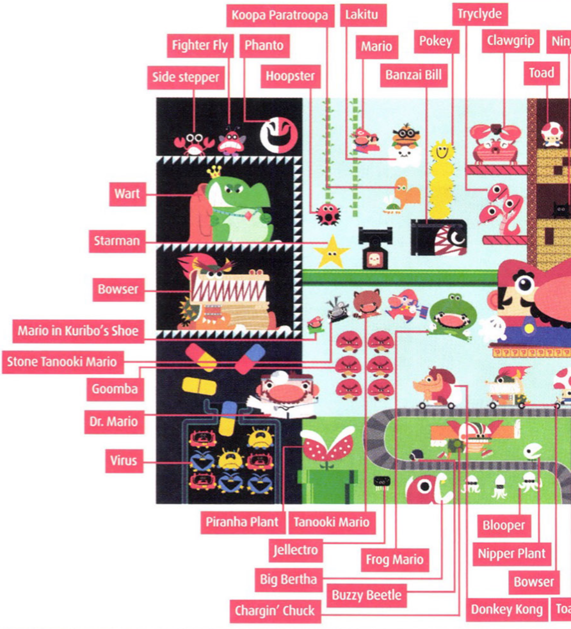
NAME THAT SCREENSHOT

This pixelated portrait might look familiar. See if you can figure out what game the enlarged screenshot is from—the answer's not as obvious as you think!

MARIO MISHMASH

Last month's poster by I Am 8-Bit artist Gabe Swarr consists of stylized characters from all over the Mario universe. We promised we'd tell you who all the characters depicted in Gabe's masterpiece are —so here we go!




Koopa Paratroopa
Lakitu
Tryclyde
Fighter Fly
Phanto
Mario
Pokey
Clawgrip
Nin
Side stepper
Hoopster
Banzai Bill
Toad
Wart
Starman
Bowser
Mario in Kuribo's Shoe
Stone Tanooki Mario
Goomba
Dr. Mario
Virus
Piranha Plant
Tanooki Mario
Jellectro
Frog Mario
Big Bertha
Buzzy Beetle
Chargin' Chuck
Blooper
Nipper Plant
Bowser
Donkey Kong
Toa

3 **What was Princess Peach's North American name prior to Yoshi's Safari for SNES?**
a. Princess Daisy
b. Princess Plum
c. Princess Toadstool
d. Princess Mushroom

4 **What was the name of Bandai's handheld gaming system, created by legendary Game Boy creator Gunpei Yokoi?**
a. WonderSwan
b. Gizmondo
c. Game Man
d. Game Gear

5 **Revolution was the code name for Wii. What was the code name for Nintendo GameCube?**
a. Ultra 64
b. Project Reality
c. Dolphin

6 **What overhyped gaming console in development by Infinium Labs was unveiled at E3 2004, and still has yet to be released?**
a. The Phantom
b. The Nomad
c. The Apparition
d. The Delusion

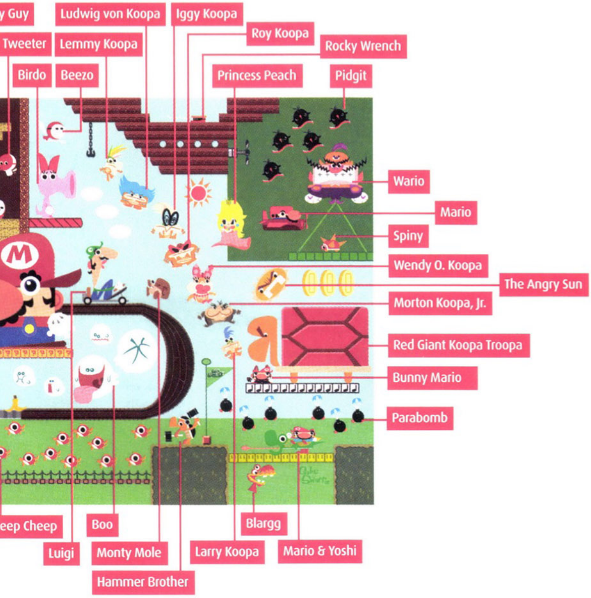
7 **What is Mega Man's name in Japan?**
a. Mega Guy
c. Rock Man
b. Quick Man
d. Cut Man

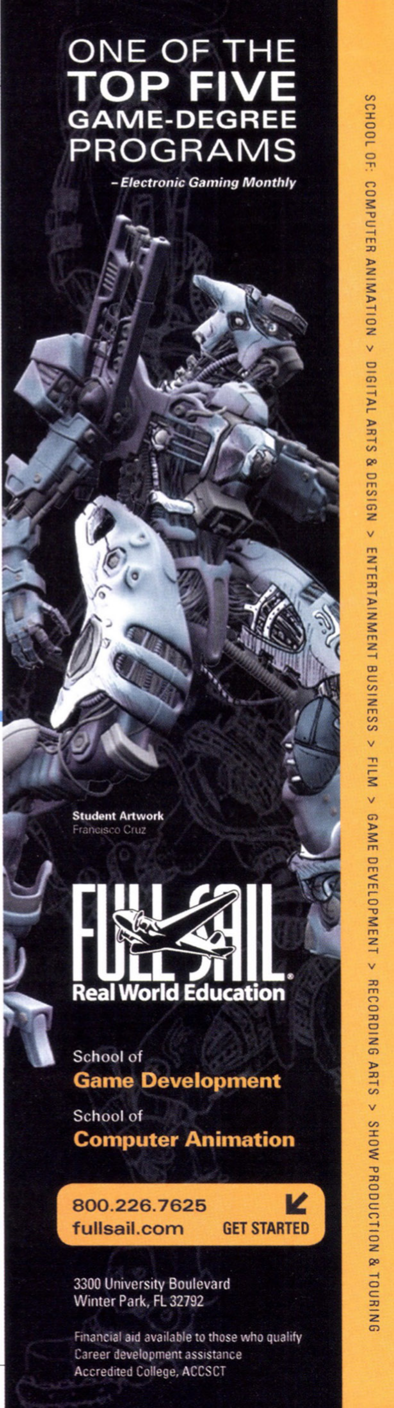
8 **Which of these is the of the two NES games that had exclusive features when played with the Power Glove peripheral?**
a. Bad Street Brawler
b. Double Dragon
c. Ninja Gaiden III
d. Final Fight

9 **Sonic's arch nemesis, Eggman, underwent a name change in Sonic Adventure. What was he known as previously in most North American Sonic games?**
a. Dr. Egghead
b. Dr. Robotnik
c. Professor Egg
c. Dr. Evil

10 **The cult-classic SNES RPG EarthBound was the second game in a Japanese series. What is the name of that series?**
a. Earth and Beyond
b. Bound High
c. Mother
d. SpaceBound

11 **What are the original names of your starting party members in Final Fantasy IV Advance for GBA (known as Final Fantasy II on the SNES)?**
a. Jenna, Kraden, and Alex
b. Firion, Maria, Guy, and Leon
c. Cecil and Kain
d. Ness, Paula, Jeff, and Poo


y Guy
Ludwig von Koopa
Iggy Koopa
Tweeter
Lemmy Koopa
Roy Koopa
Rocky Wrench
Birdo
Beezo
Princess Peach
Pidgit
Wario
Mario
Spiny
Wendy O. Koopa
The Angry Sun
Morton Koopa, Jr.
Red Giant Koopa Troopa
Bunny Mario
Parabomb
eep Cheep
Boo
Blargg
Luigi
Monty Mole
Larry Koopa
Mario & Yoshi
Hammer Brother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August 2006 Vol. 206

NEXT MONTH

It was three days of shock and awe for the Nintendo faithful. Next month, learn about the E3 that changed the face of gaming.

Wii AT E3

Electronic Entertainment Expo attendees got the first public hands-on playing time with Nintendo's revolutionary console. Next month, we'll dedicate a slate of previews and features to the Wii titles that stole the show.

TWILIGHT IN VIEW

Breaking details on The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess will help fans get through the wait for the blockbuster adventure.

HANDHELD HIGHLIGHTS

E3 wasn't just about Wii. DS titles such as Star Fox DS and Magical Vacation also made a big splash. We'll have lots of info and images.

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To contact the ESRB or for more information, visit www.esrb.org.
The Entertainment Software Rating Board evaluates each game's content and assigns one of the following ratings to reflect the appropriate age group for the game.

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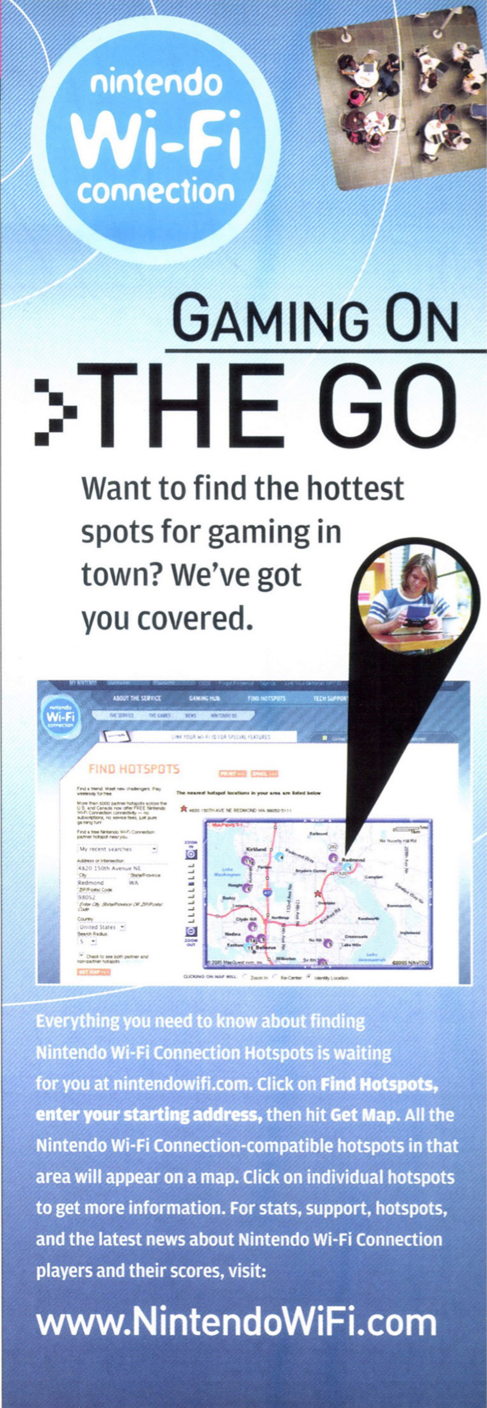
nintendo Wi-Fi connection

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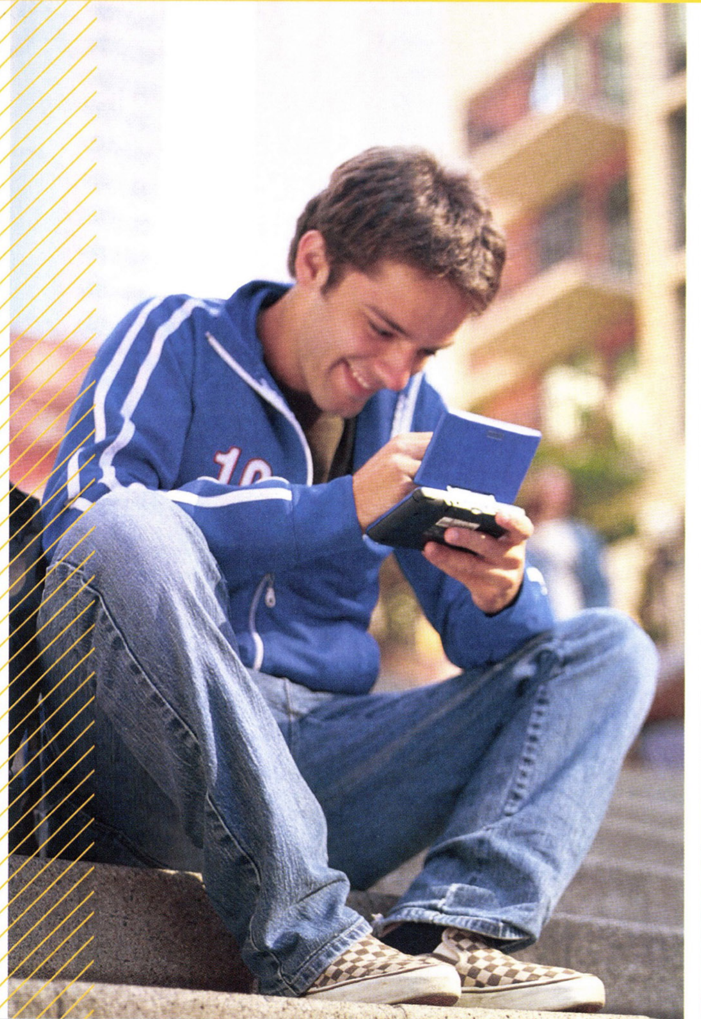

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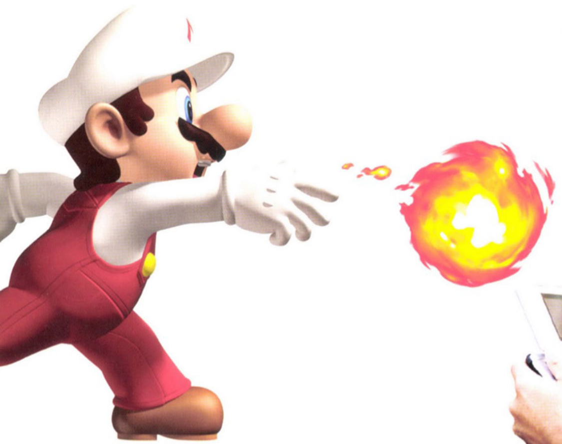

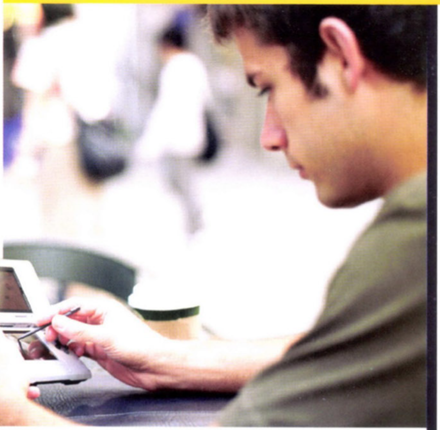

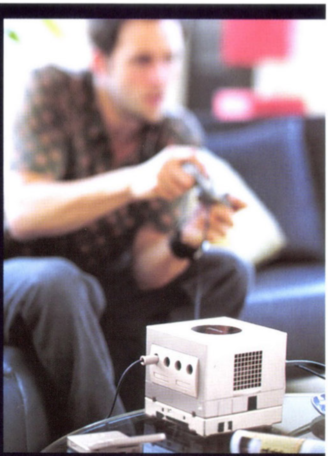

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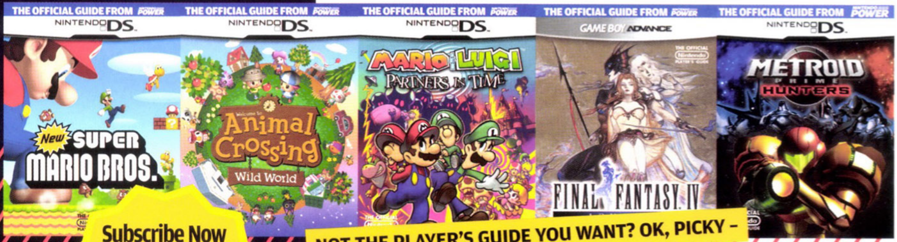
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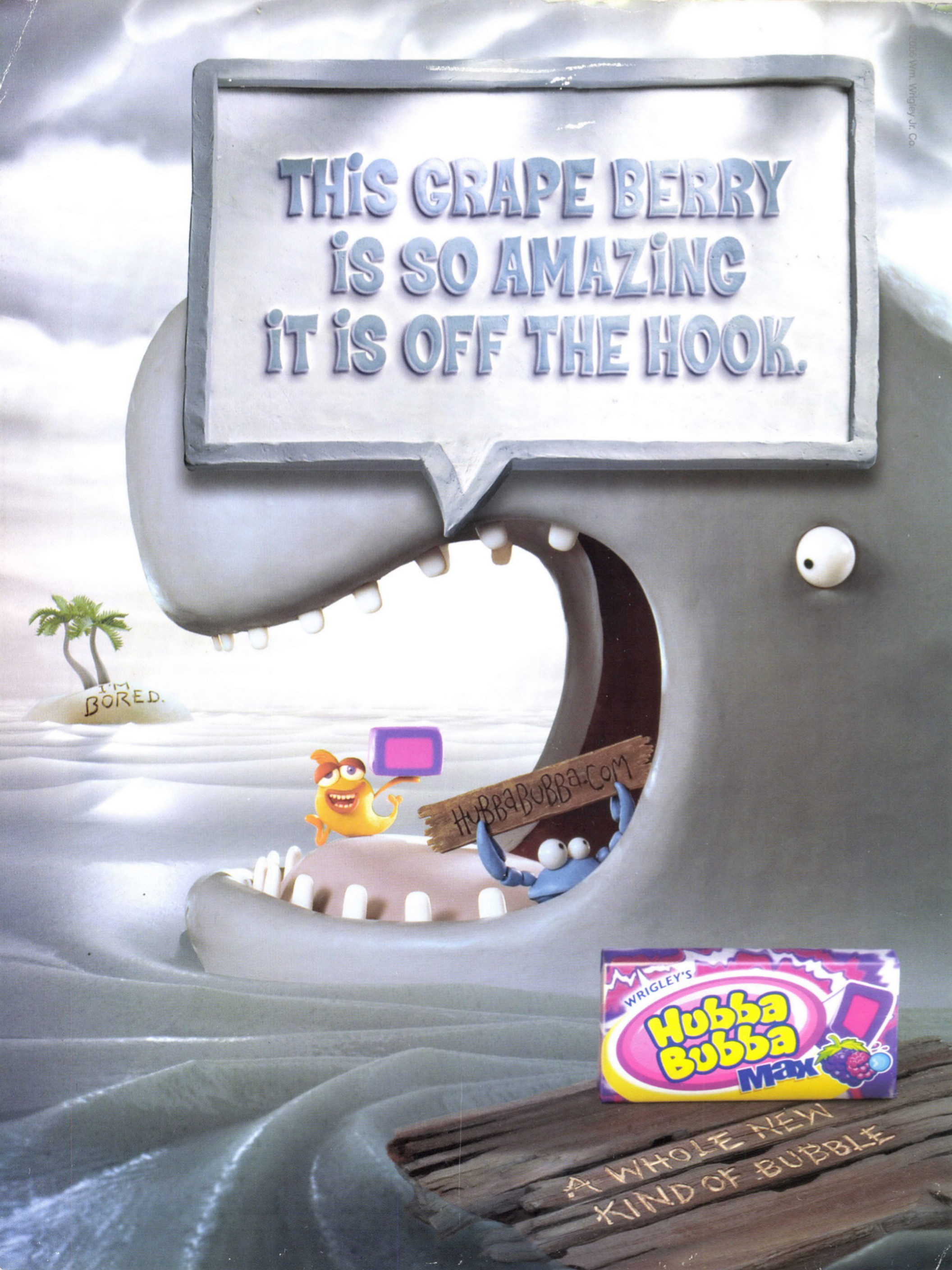

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